Tadabbur i Qur'ān Vol.4

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Tadabbur i Qur'ān

Vol. 4

Exegesis of

Sūrah Yūnus (10) – Sūrah Maryam (19)

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Rendered into English

by
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Sūrah Yūnus

A Brief Glimpse of the Sūrahs of the Third Chapter

On Sūrah Tawbah, the previous *sūrah*, ended the 2nd chapter of the Qur'ān, as referred to in the foreword of this exegesis. Now from Sūrah Yūnus begins the third chapter. It ends on Sūrah al-Nūr. The following 14 *sūrahs* are Makkan: Yūnus, Hūd, Yūsuf, al-Ra'd, Ibrāhīm, al-Ḥijr, al-Naḥl, Banī Isrā'īl, al-Kahf, Maryam. Ṭāhā, al-Anbiyā', al-Ḥajj and al-Mu'minūn. Only the last one, Sūrah al-Nūr is Madīnan. Just as readers have witnessed the paired-phenomenon of *sūrahs* in the previous two chapters, they will also observe it in the current one. Sūrah al-Nūr, the last *sūrah*, apparently seems to be a lone one. But as shall be explained, it has the status of a supplement to Sūrah al-Mu'minūn, which precedes it. The glad tidings of success in this world and the next given to the believers in Sūrah al-Mu'minūn are conditional to a certain character which is the essential consequence of faith. In Sūrah al-Nūr, this character and conduct is further delineated. In this way, the traits of a righteous society are fully highlighted in comparison to an evil one. Moreover, God's promise for such a society is also unequivocally mentioned in it thus:

وَعَدَ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مِنْكُمْ وَ عَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْاَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۪ وَ لَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِيْنَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضٰى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ اَمْنًا. (٢٤: ٥٥)

God's promise with those among you who have professed faith and done righteous deeds is that He shall grant them authority in this land the way He had granted it to those before them and He shall establish this religion that He has chosen for them and after this state of their fear, He shall transform it into peace. (24:55)

Some people regard Sūrah al-Ḥajj to be Madīnan, but this opinion is not correct. Since the last *sūrahs* of this chapter were revealed very close to migration, they do reflect the Madīnan period at some instances. But these sūrahs are Makkan with respect to their tone and content. Some verses of Sūrah al-Ḥajj do belong to the Madīnan period, but in its collective capacity, the *sūrah* is Makkan, as shall be explained in its exegesis. If a Makkan *sūrah* contains some verses that belong to the Madīnan period in the capacity of further elucidation of a certain topic, then this does not mean that whole *sūrah* is Madīnan. There are several such *sūrahs* in the Qur'ān

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which contain Madīnan verses but they have been regarded to be Makkan with respect to their meanings and tone.

If this chapter is repeatedly reflected on, one can clearly see that there is one common element that is explained in all its *sūrahs* in different styles: the conflict between truth and falsehood that had arisen in Arabia because of the Prophet's preaching will ultimately end on his victory and that of his companions and on the humiliation and defeat of the Quraysh. In other words, it can be said that this chapter warns the Quraysh and gives glad tidings to the Prophet (sws) and his companions. Through arguments drawn from human nature, intellect, the world within and around human beings and through the signs found in history and in the system of this world, it is explained to the Quraysh that the truth has come to them. If they continue to oppose it, then soon the time will arrive when they will see its horrific consequences from their very eyes. They too will meet the terrible fate met by previous nations who denied their respective messengers. Signs and remnants of their destruction that teach an exemplary lesson are present in their own land.

In a similar way, the Prophet (sws) and his companions are urged to exercise patience and perseverance and adhere to piety. They are told that the truth they are advocating will triumph one day. Arguments and signs drawn from the world around and that within them as well has from the history of nations substantiate that they will achieve this victory. However, it is the established practice of God that before the truth triumphs, its advocates have to pass through various phases of trials. Thus, they too will have to necessarily undergo these trials. If they pass through them through courage and perseverance, then success is theirs in this world as well as in the next. Verse 27 of Sūrah Ibrāhīm states: يُثَبِّتُ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ وَيُضِلُّ اللّٰهُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ.[1]

This is a brief look on the contents of this third chapter. Now, we will explain every *sūrah* independently. The first of these is Yūnus. It follows the same pattern of explanation as the previous ones: first its theme will be stated followed by an analysis of its meanings. After that, each verse will be elucidated one by one. Only God can grant me the urge and will to undertake this onerous task.

Theme

The 2nd verse of the *sūrah* comprehensively states its theme:

اَنْ اَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اَنَّ لَهُمْ قَدَمَ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۭ قَالَ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَسٰحِرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ

"Warn people and give glad tidings to those who believe that for them is a position of great honour with their Lord." The disbelievers said: "This person is an expert

1. God shall strengthen the believers in this world and in the hereafter through this strong word, and shall not acknowledge the deeds of those who were unjust to their souls.

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magician.”

In Sūrah Hūd, this fact is stated thus:

فَاصْبِرْ ۚ اِنَّ الْعَاقِبَةَ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ. (۱۱:۴۹)

So, remain steadfast. The ultimate triumph is for those who fear God. (11:49)

In Sūrah Yūsuf, the words are:

اِنَّهٗ مَنْ يَّتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرْ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ. (۱۲:۹۰)

Indeed, those who fear God and remain steadfast, then God does not waste the reward of such people who are thorough. (12:90)

Sūrah al-Ra‘d explains this perseverance and piety in detail. Thus it is said:

وَ الَّذِيْنَ صَبَرُوا ابْتِغَآءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِمْ وَ اَقَامُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَ اَنْفَقُوْا مِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ سِرًّا وَّ عَلَانِيَةً وَّ يَدْرَءُوْنَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ. (۱۳:۲۲)

And those who remained steadfast to please their Lord, were diligent in the prayer and openly and secretly spent from what We had given them and those who repel vice with virtue, they will ultimately succeed. (13:22)

Sūrah Ibrāhīm also refers to the word of monotheism that will be guarantor of the believers’ strength:

يُثَبِّتُ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِى الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَ فِى الْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ وَيُضِلُّ اللّٰهُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ۙ يَشَآءُ. (۱۴: ۲۷)

God shall strengthen the believers in this world and in the hereafter through this strong word, and shall not acknowledge the deeds of those who were unjust to their souls. (14:27)

In Sūrah al-Naḥl, it is stated:

لِلَّذِيْنَ اَحْسَنُوْا فِىْ هٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ ۭ وَلَدَارُ الْاٰخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ ۭ وَلَنِعْمَ دَارُ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ. (۱۶: ۳۰)

Those who adopted good, for them there is good in this world also and the abode of the Hereafter is far better than this and how marvellous is the abode of the pious. (16:30)

In Sūrah Banī Isrā’īl, it is mentioned that the Qur’ān guides people to the straight

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path and glad tidings of success in this world and the next are for those who tread on this path:

اِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَهْدِیْ لِلَّتِیْ هِیَ اَقْوَمُ وَ يُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا كَبِيْرًا ۙ﴿۹﴾ وَّ اَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ اَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا (۱۷: ۹-۱۰)

Indeed, this Qur'ān shows the way which is absolutely straight and gives glad tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that for them is a great reward and those who do not believe in the Hereafter, for them We have prepared a painful torment. (17:9-10)

In Sūrah al-Anbiyā', it is stated:

وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِی الزَّبُوْرِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ اَنَّ الْاَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِیَ الصّٰلِحُوْنَ (۲۱:۱۰۵)

And We have written in the Psalms after the piece of advice that the earth shall only be inherited by My righteous servants. (21:105)

In Sūrah al-Nūr, the last *sūrah* of the chapter, these glad tidings have become fully evident thus:

وَعَدَ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مِنْكُمْ وَ عَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِی الْاَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۪ وَ لَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِيْنَهُمُ الَّذِی ارْتَضٰى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ اَمْنًا (۲٤:٥٥)

God's promise with those among you who have professed faith and done righteous deeds is that He shall grant them authority in this land the way He had granted it to those before them and He shall establish this religion that He has chosen for them and after this state of their fear. (24:55)

The purpose of citing all these verses is to make the readers aware of the general tone of the *sūrahs* of this chapter. The theme of every *sūrah* and its true nature of argumentation and discussion will become evident once the analysis of each of them is presented. Presented below is this analysis for Sūrah Yūnus so that a complete glimpse of it can be gauged.

Analysis of Meanings

Verses (1-2): Sorrow is expressed at the attitude of the Quraysh regarding the Qur'ān. It was befitting for them to give due importance to these verses of wisdom that were revealed by the Almighty to a person among them. They inform the disbelievers of

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their evil fate and given glad tidings of a high rank to the believers. On the contrary, the sending of a bearer of warnings and glad tidings from among them is weighing down heavily on these disbelievers. Thus they regard him to be a magician.

Verses (3-4): God is everyone's lord. He has created the heavens and the earth and He alone is running their affairs. None can intercede before Him without His permission. Everyone will return to Him. With full justice, He will immensely reward those who have professed faith and done righteous deeds. For the disbelievers is the punishment of Hell.

Verses (5-10): Evidence from the signs found in the heavens and the earth is presented to show that this world is not a place of amusement or entertainment. Those who reflect believe that a day of justice will come after it. Only they are negligent of this fact who do not reflect on these signs and are engrossed in the pleasures of this world. The abode of such people is Hell. God will admit those who believed and did righteous deeds into the orchards of bliss because of their faith. There they will be jubilant on their success and will congratulate one another. They will also express gratitude to God for receiving these favours in their ultimate form.

Verses (11-12): If God gives respite to the rebellious in this world, then it is for a reason: He shows haste in showing mercy but not so in sending His wrath. Had this been the case as well, the rebellious would have been long gone. On the contrary, He gives such people the chance to fully go astray in their wrongdoings and so that they are conclusively delivered the truth. Their rebelliousness and arrogance is a testimony to their meanness. Such are human beings that if even slightly does God make them pass through hardships, they turn to Him in every state – whether lying down, sitting to standing. However, if they are given even a slight respite by Him, it seems that neither were they ever tested nor did they ever plead before God.

Verses (13-14): The anecdotes of the previous messengers and their nations are referred to. Why do these people not learn a lesson from them? They have been actually raised up in their place in order to test them with regard to their deeds. So, why would He deal differently with them?

Verses (15-19): It is stated that the aversion the Quraysh have for monotheism has induced them to demand some other book than the Qur'ān or at least some changes are made in it that they can accept. The reply given to them by the Prophet (sws) is that he is presenting before them God's revelations and he does not have any right to amend them. They know that he has lived a long span of his life among them and during this time has never made any claim to prophethood or initiated preaching. He has not come to them out of his own desire; he is just following orders of God. Had God not directed him, he would never have presented these things before them. At the same time, they are warned on their aversion to monotheism: the beings that they worship and think that they will intercede for them before God do not even exist; they are all figments of their imagination. God is beyond having such partners. The only religion He has sent to people is the religion of monotheism. However, people have

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created differences in it. Had God not fixed a day for passing His judgement, this dispute would have been decided forthwith.

Verses (20-23): The demand of the Quraysh for a sign of punishment is alluded to. In response to this demand, it is stated that a prophet is not authorized to show such a sign. Only God has this prerogative. Only He knows whether a sign will appear or not and the time it will. It is the arrogance found in human beings that they demand punishment. The fact is that such is their cowardice that if they are seized by God even slightly, they plead to Him and promise to be grateful if they are delivered. However, when God does deliver them, they again resort to defiance and rebelliousness.

Verses (24-27): A parable of the temporary nature of this world is cited: The disbelievers think that how can they ever lose their power and affluence. However, every other day, they observe rain causing the land to become lush green; orchards and crops become luxuriant; their owners think that who can deprive them of these. But then suddenly a wave of God's torment descends at night or day and totally ravages these things. The abode of peace is with God alone and He invites people to it. However, only the fortunate tread His path. It is these people whose faces will be radiant in the hereafter. As for those who remained engrossed in the pleasures of this world, there will be none to save them from God and their faces will be as dark as the darkness of a dark night.

Verses (28-36): In the hereafter, the disbelievers and those whom they worship will be distanced from one another. The worshipped will express their aversion from them and show their unawareness on being worshipped. On that day, each person will only encounter his own deeds and everyone will be brought forth before the actual deity: God. The disbelievers are told that if they regard only God to be the creator, sustainer, master and the giver of life and death, then they should also regard him to be their lord. If in spite of the clear truth that has come to them they regard some else to be their lord, then they have really gone astray. Do their hypothetical deities have any share in the creation and administration of this world as well as providing guidance to people because of which they associate them in the rights of God? These are mere conjectures which will be of no avail to them against the truth.

Verses (37-44): This Qur'ān has not been concocted. Its prophecies are found in the previous scriptures. It has come to confirm these prophecies and actually explains what they briefly allude to. There is no doubt that it is a divine scripture. If the disbelievers say that the Prophet (sws) has fabricated it himself and then falsely ascribed it to God, then he should ask them to bring a single *sūrah* like it. For this task, they can even try to ask their deities to help them if they can. In actuality, they are denying something whose reality has not come before them. They are in fact following the footsteps of previous nations who had similarly denied. So, the Prophet (sws) should show patience and wait for the fate they will meet. Furthermore, he should rest assured that those who have the ability are professing faith in this Book. As for the blind and deaf, they will neither listen to him nor is he responsible for them.

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He should declare their acquittal from them. They have reached this state themselves because of their deeds. God has not been unjust to them.

Verses (45-58): The disbelievers are asking to hasten the promised punishment. The fact is that when it arrives, they will think that their own life-span was not more than a brief period of time. Only God knows when this punishment will visit them. It may come in the Prophet's life time or it may descend later. However, it is an indubitable reality that when a messenger is sent to a nation, its fate is necessarily decided in this world. If they ask the Prophet (sws) about the punishment's time of arrival, he should tell them that he does not have knowledge of the unseen and that he also does not have any authority of giving benefit or inflicting harm on people. He only knows that a time is prescribed for every nation. Once this time expires, it is not given the slightest respite. If these people are in such a hurry, then the Prophet (sws) should ask them what resources do they have to combat God's punishment. At that time, even professing faith for them would be of no use. When that time comes, every soul would like to redeem itself from the punishment by giving all the treasures of the world if it can get hold of them. So why are they calling for their doom? Why do they not accept the great favour God has given them in the form of the Qur'ān. All the luxuries of life are trivial before it.

Verses (59-70): Do people who have set up baseless partners and intercessors before God think that He will be unjust to them? He in fact is very gracious to His creatures. It is the latter who show ingratitude and pass judgement on behalf of others over the prohibition or allowance regarding the favours they are blessed with from God. The Prophet (sws) and His companions are sounded assurance that God is with them at every step. God's friends have nothing to fear or grieve about. There are glad tidings for them in this world as well as in the hereafter. God's promises are certain to be fulfilled. Honour is for God alone. Those who worship others besides God only worship their speculations.

Verses (59-70): The night and day have been created by God and whatever is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Him. He is self-sufficient and has no partners or equals. Those who have set up His partners out of their own desire do not have any proof for their existence. On the Day of Judgement, they will face a stern punishment.

Verses (71-93): Historical evidence is cited in favour of the facts presented earlier. The anecdotes of prophets from Noah (sws) to Moses (sws) are briefly referred to. The Prophet (sws) and his companions are urged that the circumstances they are facing from his nation are the same as the ones faced by previous prophets from their respective nations. Thus if he and his companions show steadfastness and trust in God the way earlier prophets and their companions did, God will make them succeed in this world and in the next too. Their opponents will meet the same fate as those of Noah (sws) and Moses (sws).

Verses (94-103): While addressing the Prophet (sws), Muslims are urged that the outburst of their adversaries should not cause any doubts in their minds about this Book

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revealed to him from God. It is the truth and the good among the People of the Book also bear witness to this. Those who are denying it are facing God's law because of their deeds. However many signs they are shown, they will not accept faith unless they see the decisive punishment. When a nation faces God's law, it does not accept faith. It is only the nation of Jonah (sws) which was delivered when it was about to face God's punishment. It professed faith when the punishment was about to arrive and was saved by God. Believers should keep this in mind that God wants people to use their intellect and then profess faith and not by being compelled to it after seeing the signs of punishment. If God wanted to compel people to faith, it was very easy for Him to do so. However, He did not choose this. Only they are willing to accept faith who use their intellect and insight. Those who gather heaps of filth on their hearts do not have the urge to accept faith. The greatest of signs do not benefit such people. These people only wait for that decisive punishment to arrive which the previous nations have faced. The Prophet (sws) should tell tem to wait for it and he also will wait for it.

Verses (104-109): The Prophet (sws) makes a decisive declaration before his adversaries: if anyone has any doubts about his religion, they should fully understand that he does not worship what they worship; he only worships the one and only God. He is told to adhere to this monotheism. This is because causing harm and benefit is in the hands of God. Others have no say in this. It is declared through the tongue of the Prophet (sws) that the truth has come from God and he has delivered it to people. He who now accepts guidance will benefit from it and he who goes astray will bear its consequences. The Prophet (sws) is not responsible for the faith of anyone. At the end, he is told to follow divine revelations and hold fast to them until the decision of God arrives because He is the best of those who decide.

Section I: Verses (1-10)

بِسۡمِ اللّٰہِ الرَّحۡمٰنِ الرَّحِیۡمِ

الٓرٰ ۚ تِلۡکَ اٰیٰتُ الۡکِتٰبِ الۡحَکِیۡمِ ﴿۱﴾ اَکَانَ لِلنَّاسِ عَجَبًا اَنۡ اَوۡحَیۡنَاۤ اِلٰی رَجُلٍ مِّنۡہُمۡ اَنۡ اَنۡذِرِ النَّاسَ وَ بَشِّرِ
الَّذِیۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡۤا اَنَّ لَہُمۡ قَدَمَ صِدۡقٍ عِنۡدَ رَبِّہِمۡ ؕ قَالَ الۡکٰفِرُوۡنَ اِنَّ ہٰذَا لَسٰحِرٌ مُّبِیۡنٌ ﴿۲﴾ اِنَّ رَبَّکُمُ اللّٰہُ
الَّذِیۡ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الۡاَرۡضَ فِیۡ سِتَّۃِ اَیَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسۡتَوٰی عَلَی الۡعَرۡشِ یُدَبِّرُ الۡاَمۡرَ ؕ مَا مِنۡ شَفِیۡعٍ اِلَّا مِنۡۢ
بَعۡدِ اِذۡنِہٖ ؕ ذٰلِکُمُ اللّٰہُ رَبُّکُمۡ فَاعۡبُدُوۡہُ ؕ اَفَلَا تَذَکَّرُوۡنَ ﴿۳﴾ اِلَیۡہِ مَرۡجِعُکُمۡ جَمِیۡعًا ؕ وَعۡدَ اللّٰہِ حَقًّا ؕ اِنَّہٗ
یَبۡدَؤُا الۡخَلۡقَ ثُمَّ یُعِیۡدُہٗ لِیَجۡزِیَ الَّذِیۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا وَ عَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ بِالۡقِسۡطِ ؕ وَ الَّذِیۡنَ کَفَرُوۡا لَہُمۡ شَرَابٌ مِّنۡ

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حَمِيْمٍ وَّ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌۢ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْفُرُوْنَ ۝٤ هُوَ الَّذِىْ جَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ ضِيَآءً وَّ الْقَمَرَ نُوْرًا وَّ قَدَّرَهٗ مَنَازِلَ
لِتَعْلَمُوْا عَدَدَ السِّنِيْنَ وَ الْحِسَابَ ؕ مَا خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ ذٰلِكَ اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ۚ يُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَّعْلَمُوْنَ ۝٥ اِنَّ فِى
اخْتِلَافِ الَّيْلِ وَ النَّهَارِ وَ مَا خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَّقُوْنَ ۝٦ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَرْجُوْنَ
لِقَآءَنَا وَ رَضُوْا بِالْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَ اطْمَاَنُّوْا بِهَا وَ الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَنْ اٰيٰتِنَا غٰفِلُوْنَ ۝٧ اُولٰٓئِكَ مَاْوٰىهُمُ النَّارُ بِمَا
كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ۝٨ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَ عَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ يَهْدِيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِاِيْمَانِهِمْ ۚ تَجْرِىْ مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ
الْاَنْهٰرُ فِىْ جَنّٰتِ النَّعِيْمِ ۝٩ دَعْوٰىهُمْ فِيْهَا سُبْحٰنَكَ اللّٰهُمَّ وَ تَحِيَّتُهُمْ فِيْهَا سَلٰمٌ ۚ وَ اٰخِرُ دَعْوٰىهُمْ اَنِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ۝١٠

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Ever-Merciful.

This is Alif Lām Rā. These are verses of a Book replete with wisdom. Are these people overcome with wonder that We have sent Our revelation to a person from among them: "Warn people and give glad tidings to the believers that for them is a position of high rank with their Lord." The disbelievers said: "Indeed, this person is a plain magician." (1-2)

Indeed, your Lord is the God Who created the heavens and the earth in six phases. Then He lodged Himself on His throne while governing affairs. No one can intercede before Him without His permission. Your Lord is this God; so, worship Him alone. Do you not think? To Him all of you will return. This is a true promise of God. Indeed, it is He Who initiates creation; then He will create again so that those who professed faith and did righteous deeds, He may justly reward them. And those who disbelieved, there is boiling water and a painful punishment because of their disbelief. It is He who made the sun radiant and the moon a light and ordained phases for it so that you are able to find the number of years and their calculation from it. God has created all this only with a purpose. He explains His signs for those who want to know. Indeed, in the alternation of day and night and in the creatures of the heavens and the earth there are signs for those who fear. Those who do not entertain any hope to meet Us and are content with the life of this world and satisfied with it and who are indifferent to Our signs, for such people Hell is the abode in requital for their deeds. Those who professed faith and did righteous deeds, their Lord will make them reach their destination because of their faith. Beneath them rivers will be flowing in orchards of delight. There their slogan will be: "God! Exalted are you!" And their salutations there with one another will be "peace" and their last statement will be: "Gratitude is for God alone who is Lord of all the universe." (3-10)

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Explanation

الٓرٰ ۚ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ الْكِتٰبِ الْحَكِيْمِ ۝١ اَكَانَ لِلنَّاسِ عَجَبًا اَنْ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلٰى رَجُلٍ مِّنْهُمْ اَنْ اَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اَنَّ لَهُمْ قَدَمَ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۭ قَالَ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَسٰحِرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ۝٢[2]

Alif Lām Rā is the Qur'ānic name of this *sūrah* and is the antecedent of the demonstrative pronoun تِلْكَ. They form the isolated letters which have been comprehensively discussed at the beginning of Sūrah al-Baqarah's exegesis. The attribute "wise" for the book points to the fact that such are arguments found within it for every claim it makes that it does not need any external arguments. Those who want proof for its veracity should reflect on its contents instead of looking outside it. If their intellect and nature are upright, it will remove all their doubts.

As per concomitant indications, the word "people" refers to the Quraysh. The verse implies that when this book is a proof to its own veracity then baseless is the objection presented by them viz. why has it been revealed to someone among them? This should not be any cause of wonder. In fact, if they deliberate, this is God's great favour to them that He has revealed a book to someone from among them, about whose past and present, character and conduct they are fully aware of and whose honesty and uprightness they fully acknowledge. Would it have been better that someone they do not know bear witness to the truth or this arrangement which God has made? He has appointed the best from among them to deliver the truth in their own language. It is as if their own conscience has delivered the truth to them. Moreover, if an angel or jinn had been appointed for this task, this too would have been inappropriate. Only a human being can been an example and model for other human beings ant some angel or jinn.

The real message of this book or its deliverer is stated by the verse as delivering glad tidings to the believers. In other words, this message too is not something to be amazed about or be rejected. It is a fact. The life of this world is not going to end like this. A day will come when everyone will have to return to God. Those who professed belief in this book will be rewarded there and those who rejected it will be humiliated there and will be thrown into Hell. If this statement of fact disturbs the Quraysh, then let it be so. If they are wonderstruck, then let them be but a reality cannot become invalid merely because it strikes at the ego of some people.

In the expression قَدَمَ صِدْقٍ, the word صِدْق connotes depth, stability and permanence. Thus the expression means "a place of honour", "a high status", "an everlasting success." The glad tidings found in this verse for the believers are found in clear words but the element of warning has been left vague in it. The reason for this in my

2. This is Alif Lām Rā. These are verses of a Book replete with wisdom. Are these people overcome with wonder that We have sent Our revelation to a person from among them: "Warn people and give glad tidings to the believers that for them is a position of high rank with their Lord." The disbelievers said: "Indeed, this person is a plain magician."

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opinion is that the prominent element in this whole chapter is that of glad tidings for the believers. The fate of the disbelievers is mentioned secondarily in it.

The last part "indeed, this person is an expert magician" signifies the amazement and rejection of the disbelievers. In other words, when the verses of this book of wisdom are recited before them, then instead of giving them due importance and professing faith in them, they regard its bearer to be a plain magician. Thus they do acknowledge the potent and powerful nature of this book as well as its eloquence and articulacy but regard all this to be a magic and wizardry of words and a feat of fluency of expression of its bearer. In this way, they try to convince their masses that the impact and influence of the book is not because it is from God and contains a treasure of wisdom but because it is the trick and ploy of an expert magician who is trying to mesmerize them.

It may be kept in consideration here that when the disbelievers regard messengers to be magicians, it is not merely to lessen the importance of the miracles worked by them, it is also to lessen the stature of the book they present. When they see that the upright among them are being influenced by it, they regard it to be a magic of words and that these upright elements should save themselves from its effects. The same objective exists in regarding the Qur'ān to be magic. Similarly, the disbelievers would regard the Prophet (sws) to be a sorcerer for the same purpose. They would thereby try to convince their people that both the book presented and the person presenting it are not supernatural. They would tell them that just as their own soothsayers would compose rhymed prose in an embellished way and just as they make prophecies about the future, no different was the case with Prophet Muḥammad (sws). In other words, they would make their masses realize that all that they see are well known to them and there is no reason to regard them as divine.

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ فِيْ سِتَّةِ اَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُدَبِّرُ الْاَمْرَ ؕ مَا مِنْ شَفِيْعٍ اِلَّا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اِذْنِهٖ ؕ
ذٰلِكُمُ اللّٰهُ رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوْهُ ؕ اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ۝ اِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيْعًا ؕ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقًّا ؕ اِنَّهٗ يَبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهٗ لِيَجْزِيَ
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ بِالْقِسْطِ ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَهُمْ شَرَابٌ مِّنْ حَمِيْمٍ وَّعَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌۢ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْفُرُوْنَ ۝[3]

This verse presents the arguments in favour of the warnings and glad tidings stated in the previous verse. The sequence of the premises stated in it is as follows: the God Who has created the heavens and the earth and Who is acknowledged by them as well

3. Indeed, your Lord is the God Who created the heavens and the earth in six phases. Then He lodged Himself on His throne while governing affairs. No one can intercede before Him without His permission. Your Lord is this God; so, worship Him alone. Do you not think? To Him all of you will return. This is a true promise of God. Indeed, it is He Who initiates creation; then He will create again so that those who professed faith and did righteous deeds, He may justly reward them. And those who disbelieved, there is boiling water and a painful punishment because of their disbelief.

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to be the Creator is their Lord and Master as well. How can it be possible that the Creator be someone else and the Lord and Master be another being? If they have set up other Lords besides Him and have some expectations from them, then it is their mere foolishness which is against sense and human nature and also against what they themselves acknowledge. Moreover, this universe has not been created as a result of some accidental happening. In fact, it has been created in six days of God's measure. In other words, in six stages in a gradual way. This gradual development and evolution itself bears witness that neither is its creation an accidental happening nor is it made as an amusement for an entertainer. In fact, it is a very meaningful and purposeful place that has been created in a very elaborate and painstaking manner. The essential requisite of this meaningfulness is that man who occupies the status of a vicegerent should not be allowed to go scot free and there must come a day in which he is rewarded or punished according to his deeds. Thus those who lead their lives according to the desire of this universe's creator be rewarded and those who regard this world to be a place of jest and amusement and spend all their lives in evil be punished.

The words "then He lodged Himself on His throne" mean people should not think that after creating the world, God became unconcerned with it, becoming a silent first cause and then handed over its affairs to others. In fact, He Himself is governing all its affairs. In the Psalms, it is stated: "For you have upheld my right and my cause, sitting enthroned as the righteous judge." (9:4)

The words "no one can intercede before Him without His permission" imply that none should be under the misconception that he will be able to save himself from God's punishment through someone's intercession nor will such intercession convert some truth into falsehood or vice versa. God's knowledge embraces everything.

The words "Your Lord is this God; so, worship Him alone. Do you not think?" actually amazingly refer to the origin of the deities the idolaters have fabricated: where have they come from? How do the idolaters ignore their own premises?

The words "to Him all of you will return" allude to the fact that only God is the being everyone will finally report to, and this promise is certain to be fulfilled. The word "all" here emphasizes that even their deities will return to God. None will be able to evade this fate.

The words "indeed, it is He Who initiates creation; then He will create again" substantiate the premise that how can it be difficult for God to create a second time when He already did this the first time.

The words "so that those who professed faith and did righteous deeds, He may justly reward them" state the real purpose for the arrival of Judgement Day. Punishment of disbelievers is a natural consequence of it. It is these glad tidings that were mentioned in the beginning. After stating their reason, they are once again brought up.

The words "and those who disbelieved, there is boiling water and a painful

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punishment because of their disbelief" mention the punishment of the disbelievers. Boiling water will be the first thing they will encounter, as is mentioned elsewhere. After that they will face harsher punishments.

هُوَ الَّذِیْ جَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ ضِیَآءً وَّ الْقَمَرَ نُوْرًا وَّ قَدَّرَهٗ مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوْا عَدَدَ السِّنِیْنَ وَ الْحِسَابَ ؕ مَا خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ ذٰلِكَ اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ۚ یُفَصِّلُ الْاٰیٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ یَّعْلَمُوْنَ ۝۵ اِنَّ فِی اخْتِلَافِ الَّیْلِ وَ النَّهَارِ وَ مَا خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ لَاٰیٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ یَّتَّقُوْنَ ۝۶ اِنَّ الَّذِیْنَ لَا یَرْجُوْنَ لِقَآءَنَا وَ رَضُوْا بِالْحَیٰوةِ الدُّنْیَا وَ اطْمَاَنُّوْا بِهَا وَ الَّذِیْنَ هُمْ عَنْ اٰیٰتِنَا غٰفِلُوْنَ ۝۷ اُولٰٓئِكَ مَاْوٰىهُمُ النَّارُ بِمَا كَانُوْا یَكْسِبُوْنَ ۝۸ اِنَّ الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَ عَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ یَهْدِیْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِاِیْمَانِهِمْ ۚ تَجْرِیْ مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْاَنْهٰرُ فِیْ جَنّٰتِ النَّعِیْمِ ۝۹ دَعْوٰىهُمْ فِیْهَا سُبْحٰنَكَ اللّٰهُمَّ وَ تَحِیَّتُهُمْ فِیْهَا سَلٰمٌ ۚ وَ اٰخِرُ دَعْوٰىهُمْ اَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِیْنَ ۝۱۰[4]

After substantiating monotheism, now reward and punishment are corroborated: whoever deliberates on this universe will clearly see that it is not the godown of a trash-collector. On the contrary, very evident in its every nook and corner is the great power and unfathomable mercy of its creator. It has a thorough arrangement in it, unparalleled sequence and an exceptional symmetry and proportion. The sun rises at prescribed times and lights up the whole world with its radiance. It is because of its heat and help that different seasons like winters autumn and spring arise. Each of them is essential for the sustenance and development of this world. The moon absorbs the light of the sun[5] and passes through various phases and provides luminosity at night

4. Indeed, it is He Who initiates creation; then He will create again so that those who professed faith and did righteous deeds, He may justly reward them. And those who disbelieved, there is boiling water and a painful punishment because of their disbelief. It is He who made the sun radiant and the moon a light and ordained phases for it so that you are able to find the number of years and their calculation from it. God has created all this only with a purpose. He explains His signs for those who want to know. Indeed, in the alternation of day and night and in the creatures of the heavens and the earth there are signs for those who fear. Those who do not entertain any hope to meet Us and are content with the life of this world and satisfied with it and who are indifferent to Our signs, for such people Hell is the abode in requital for their deeds. Those who professed faith and did righteous deeds, their Lord will guide them to their destination because of their faith. Beneath them rivers will be flowing in orchards of delight. There their slogan will be: "God! Exalted are you!" And their salutations there with one another will be "peace" and their last statement will be: "Gratitude is for God alone who is Lord of all the universe."

5. The word used for the sun is ضیاء (radiance) and for the moon is نور(light). Some people say that this choice of words in accordance with the fact that the sun has its own light and moon obtains its light from the sun. Though this in itself is true, however, in my opinion the former actually refers to light that has heat in it and the latter to light which is coldish. This in fact is true as well.

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for people. It is also instrumental in creating months and forming calendars for them – Who can then say that this world will continue without any accountability between good and evil or end without it? If this is accepted, then all this power and wisdom evident all around become purposeless and this world becomes no more than a place of amusement and loses its meaning. Such is the illogical, unfair and untenable nature of this inference that no upright and logical person can for a moment accept it. If some bricks are scattered about, we can say that they do not have any purpose. But can the same be said of the Taj Mahal of Agra, the Red Fort of Lahore and the Congregational Mosque of Delhi?

The words "God has created all this only with a purpose" mention the acknowledgement of true human nature. It is the call of every sane person. The purpose referred to is that this world reaches a culmination in which justice is meted out, judgement is passed between truth and falsehood and everyone is rewarded or punished according to his deeds.

The words "He explains His signs for those who want to know" imply that proofs and arguments of this reward and punishment are scattered all over this universe. Eyes that can really see cannot miss them. However, if they are hidden from someone, then God has explained them in detail for those who would like to know and understand. In verse 191 of Sūraḥ Āl-i 'Imrān, it is thus said: وَيَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ فِيْ خَلْقِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۚ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هٰذَا بَاطِلًا ۚ سُبْحٰنَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ (those who keep reflecting on the creation of the heavens and the earth. [Their prayer is:] "Lord! You have not created all this without a purpose). Its exegesis can be looked by those who would like to know more.

The words "indeed, in the alternation of day and night and in the creatures of the heavens and the earth there are signs for those who fear" further show that the phenomena mentioned have a grand purpose. Moreover, they also depict the great system of providence found in the different natures of night and day: the day provides people the opportunities to earn their livelihood and the night gives them rest and sleep. Whoever deliberates on this system necessarily reaches the conclusion that opposite elements can work for a common purpose with such amazing harmony when it is believed that all this universe is being governed by the will of a powerful being. Moreover, also evident from this is that He Who has made this elaborate system of providence and subsistence and is administering it in such a thorough manner will not let mankind go without any acountability. In fact, a day will necessarily come when He will reward those who recognized the rights this providence imposed on them and cast into Hell those who remained indifferent to them. Precisely this conclusion is reached upon reflecting on all the components and mutally conflicting elments of this universe. It guides people to the reward and punishment in the hereafter. This awareness in turn creates true piety towards which the words "You have not created all this without a purpose" of the above cited verse of Sūrah Āl-i 'Imrān point.

The words "those who do not entertain any hope to meet Us and are content with

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the life of this world and satisfied with it and who are indifferent to Our signs, for such people Hell is the abode in requital for their deeds" depict the fate of people who in spite of all these signs of continue to be blind and deaf and do not have the fear of the Hereafter, The word رجاء here means "hope" and this is its real meaning too.

Consider now the last part: "Those who professed faith and did righteous deeds, their Lord will guide them to their destination because of their faith. Beneath them rivers will be flowing in orchards of delight. There their slogan will be: "God! Exalted are you!" And their salutations there with one another will be "peace" and their last statement will be: "Gratitude is for God alone who is Lord of all the universe." The word "guide" here means to guide people to reach the destination which is the purpose of creation of all the universe. In other words, God will guide them to their rank and status in accordance with their deeds. Their exclamation in return expresses their jubilation that their contention that this universe has a purpose and cannot be a place of amusement has came true. They will congratulate one another on this success. On the other hand, the disbelievers will be doomed and will curse one another.

Section II: Verses (11-19)

In this section, first a demand of the disbelievers about reward and punishment is responded to: they would contend that if this is such an indubitable reality and they have become worthy of it because of their deeds, why are they not being shown a sample of this promised punishment? They are told by God that His established practice is that He takes initiative in mercy; He is very slow to show anger. If He had been as quick in showing anger, their matter would have been decided a long time ago. After that, the hastiness shown by the disbelievers is explained. They stubbornly demand punishment but when they are seized by God, they start to raise a hue and cry. Then if they are given respite, they again start showing arrogance. Such people do not accept guidance come what may. After this, their attention is directed to seek a lesson from the nations of the past – nations whom they succeeded. Why do they not learn a lesson from them because their fate too would be no different?

Next, another demand made by them is taken up: they wanted the Qur'ān to be totally changed or altered as much so that it suited them. They were not prepared to listen to the teaching of monotheism neither were they ready to hear any threat about punishment. It is for this reason that they demanded a new book in place of the Qur'ān or to have it altered, without which they were not prepared to accept it. They are responded to through the tongue of the Prophet (sws) that he does not have the authority to make any change in it. It is a God-given responsibility that he is discharging. If there was a possibility to say no to this responsibility, he would not have let anyone even know about it. He has spent a long life span among them and

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they know that he never had any desire for leadership. So, how can he think of imputing falsehood to God in this age?

At the end, the baseless nature of the belief of polytheism is explained. The purpose is to tell them that this belief because of which they show aversion to the Qur'ān has no grounds neither in the heavens nor in the earth.

Readers may proceed to study these verses now in the light of this background.

Text and Translation

وَلَوْ يُعَجِّلُ اللّٰهُ لِلنَّاسِ الشَّرَّ اسْتِعْجَالَهُمْ بِالْخَيْرِ لَقُضِيَ اِلَيْهِمْ اَجَلُهُمْ ؕ فَنَذَرُ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَرْجُوْنَ لِقَآءَنَا فِيْ
طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُوْنَ ﴿١١﴾ وَاِذَا مَسَّ الْاِنْسَانَ الضُّرُّ دَعَانَا لِجَنْۢبِهٖۤ اَوْ قَاعِدًا اَوْ قَآئِمًا ۚ فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُ ضُرَّهٗ مَرَّ
كَاَنْ لَّمْ يَدْعُنَاۤ اِلٰى ضُرٍّ مَّسَّهٗ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْمُسْرِفِيْنَ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ اَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُوْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
لَمَّا ظَلَمُوْا ۙ وَجَآءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ وَمَا كَانُوْا لِيُؤْمِنُوْا ؕ كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْقَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنٰكُمْ
خَلٰٓئِفَ فِي الْاَرْضِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ لِنَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَاِذَا تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيَاتُنَا بَيِّنٰتٍ ۙ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ لَا
يَرْجُوْنَ لِقَآءَنَا ائْتِ بِقُرْاٰنٍ غَيْرِ هٰذَاۤ اَوْ بَدِّلْهُ ؕ قُلْ مَا يَكُوْنُ لِيْۤ اَنْ اُبَدِّلَهٗ مِنْ تِلْقَآئِ نَفْسِيْ ۚ اِنْ اَتَّبِعُ اِلَّا مَا
يُوْحٰۤى اِلَيَّ ۚ اِنِّيْۤ اَخَافُ اِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّيْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿١٥﴾ قُلْ لَّوْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ مَا تَلَوْتُهٗ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَاۤ اَدْرٰىكُمْ بِهٖ ۖ
فَقَدْ لَبِثْتُ فِيْكُمْ عُمُرًا مِّنْ قَبْلِهٖ ؕ اَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ فَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا اَوْ كَذَّبَ بِاٰيٰتِهٖ ؕ
اِنَّهٗ لَا يُفْلِحُ الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَيَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ شُفَعَآؤُنَا عِنْدَ
اللّٰهِ ؕ قُلْ اَتُنَبِّئُوْنَ اللّٰهَ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَلَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ؕ سُبْحٰنَهٗ وَتَعٰلٰى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَا كَانَ
النَّاسُ اِلَّاۤ اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً فَاخْتَلَفُوْا ؕ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ فِيْمَا فِيْهِ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾

If God were swift in the matter of punishment for people the way He is swift in mercy for them, their term would have been made to reach its end. So, We leave to wander in their rebellion those who do not expect to meet Us. And such is a human being that when he is struck by a calamity, he calls Us lying down, sitting and standing. Then when We deliver him of his calamity, he walks away as if he never called us in the calamity that had struck him. The deeds of those who cross the limits have been made to seem fair in this way. (11-12)

And We destroyed the nations before you when they became unjust. And their messengers came to them with veritable signs and they did not profess faith. Thus do We punish a wrongdoing nation. Then after them We made you their successors in the land to see what you do. (13-14)

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And when Our clear revelations are recited before them, then those who do not have fear of meeting Us, say: "Bring another Qur'ān instead of this or change it." Say: What right do I have to change it from myself? I only follow the revelation that comes to me. If I disobeyed my Lord, I fear the punishment of a horrible day. Say: Had God willed, I would neither have recited it to you nor would God have informed you of it. I have spent a whole life among you before this. Then, do you not use your intellect? Who will be more unjust than the person who imputes falsehood to God or denies His revelation? Indeed, the wrongdoers shall never succeed. (15-17)

And they worship those besides God who can neither harm nor benefit them and say: "They are our intercessors before God." Say: Do you wish to inform God of that which He Himself has no knowledge, neither in the heavens nor in the earth. He is pure and exalted from what they associate as His partners. And people were in fact one community only; then they differed. And had a matter not already been decided by your Lord, the issue in which they are differing would have been decided among them. (18-19)

Explanation

وَ لَوۡ يُعَجِّلُ اللّٰهُ لِلنَّاسِ الشَّرَّ اسۡتِعۡجَالَهُمۡ بِالۡخَيۡرِ لَقُضِيَ اِلَيۡهِمۡ اَجَلُهُمۡ ؕ فَنَذَرُ الَّذِيۡنَ لَا يَرۡجُوۡنَ لِقَآءَنَا فِيۡ طُغۡيَانِهِمۡ يَعۡمَهُوۡنَ ﴿۱۱﴾[6]

This verse is a response to the hastiness of the disbelievers, as has been indicated before. When they would be warned of the fate of denying God's revelations, they would immediately demand from the Prophet (sws) to bring to them that punishment if he was truthful and if according to him it had become incumbent upon them because of their denial. In reply, the established practice of God is stated.

In the expression اسۡتِعۡجَالَهُمۡ بِالۡخَيۡرِ, اسۡتِعۡجَال is annexed towards its object. In other words, God has created this world primarily to show mercy. Thus He sends His mercy to people and also wants them to give it due regard before their term expires. They should adopt the path of virtue, which will make them worthy of God's blessings and mercy both in this world and in the next. It is the requisite of precisely this established practice that He not show haste in punishing those who are arrogant before Him and deny His messenger.

The words "So, We leave to wander in their rebellion those who do not expect to meet Us" state the requisite of this established practice: in spite of their defiance and rebelliousness, people should be given as much respite as possible. This is because if there is any possibility for them to mend their ways, they are afforded this opportunity;

6. If God were swift in the matter of punishment for people the way He is swift in mercy for them, their term would have been made to reach its end. So, We leave to wander in their rebellion those who do not expect to meet Us.

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and if this is not what they want to do, then such be the conclusive nature of the truth delivered to them that they are left with no excuse to present before their Lord in the hereafter – something which they have absolutely no fear of.

وَاِذَا مَسَّ الْاِنْسَانَ الضُّرُّ دَعَانَا لِجَنْۢبِهٖۤ اَوْ قَاعِدًا اَوْ قَآىِٕمًا ۚ فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُ ضُرَّهٗ مَرَّ كَاَنْ لَّمْ يَدْعُنَاۤ اِلٰى ضُرٍّ مَّسَّهٗ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْمُسْرِفِيْنَ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿۱۲﴾[7]

The word "human being" is a general one; however, it refers to the tyrannical Quraysh who were demanding punishment. They were not considered worthy of being addressed and hence a general word was used. The verse strikes at their arrogance and is also an indication to the fact that none should think that if the demand of punishment from these people is fulfilled, they will profess faith. Such people do not accept faith. They do what the verse states.

وَ لَقَدْ اَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُوْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُوْا ۙ وَ جَآءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ وَ مَا كَانُوْا لِيُؤْمِنُوْا ؕ كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِی الْقَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿۱۳﴾ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنٰكُمْ خَلٰٓئِفَ فِی الْاَرْضِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ لِنَنْظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿۱۴﴾[8]

This answer has been given to the Quraysh by addressing them in the light of history: why do they not learn a lesson from what other nations before them faced? Is it necessary that they will only learn that they were told the truth when they encounter what their predecessors did? Here the reference is brief. Some important events of history are also narrated ahead in this *sūrah*.

The injustice referred to in the words "when they became unjust" is the one these nations inflicted on themselves by denying their messengers. The words "and their messengers came to them with veritable signs and they did not profess faith" depict the details of this injustice. The words "Thus do We punish a wrongdoing nation" imply that how can they save themselves from the punishment of denying God's messenger. The words "then after them We made you their successors in the land to see what you do" further emphasize that how will they be treated differently?

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7. And such is a human being that when he is struck by a calamity, he calls Us lying down, sitting and standing. Then when We deliver him of his calamity, he walks away as if he never called us in the calamity that had struck him. The deeds of those who cross the limits have been made to seem fair in this way.

8. And We destroyed the nations before you when they became unjust. And their messengers came to them with veritable signs and they did not profess faith. Thus do We punish a wrongdoing nation. Then after them We made you their successors in the land to see what you do.

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وَ اِذَا تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيَاتُنَا بَيِّنٰتٍ ۙ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَرْجُوْنَ لِقَآءَنَا ائْتِ بِقُرْاٰنٍ غَيْرِ هٰذَآ اَوْ بَدِّلْهُ ؕ قُلْ مَا يَكُوْنُ لِيْٓ اَنْ اُبَدِّلَهٗ مِنْ تِلْقَآئِ نَفْسِيْ ۚ اِنْ اَتَّبِعُ اِلَّا مَا يُوْحٰٓى اِلَيَّ ۚ اِنِّيْٓ اَخَافُ اِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّيْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿۱۵﴾[9]

Expressed in this verse is their response to the verses of monotheism and hereafter narrated to them. Their response shows that they regarded the Qur'ān to be authored by the Prophet (sws) so that he could alter it at their demand. This demand is actually a proof of the defeat of his opponents. They had accepted that they cannot disregard the Qur'ān. If there was a way out, then it was to have it altered according to their desire. Thus the rejoinder given through the tongue of the Prophet (sws) is very apt.

قُلْ لَّوْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ مَا تَلَوْتُهٗ عَلَيْكُمْ وَ لَآ اَدْرٰىكُمْ بِهٖ ۖ فَقَدْ لَبِثْتُ فِيْكُمْ عُمُرًا مِّنْ قَبْلِهٖ ؕ اَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿۱۶﴾ فَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا اَوْ كَذَّبَ بِاٰيٰتِهٖ ؕ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُفْلِحُ الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿۱۷﴾[10]

The verb أدرى is from *if'āl* category. Its subject is God. Some people regard it to connote a direct address to bring it in harmony with تَلَوْتُهٗ but this is against linguistic principles.

This verse now responds to the first part of the demand of the disbelievers through the tongue of the Prophet (sws). Ie. to bring another Qur'ān. They are told that the Prophet (sws) never desired to be the recipient of the Qur'ān so that he could stake claim for any leadership. He wanted to stay away from the huge responsibility it entailed. But it was because of God's will that he has accepted this burden. Had this not been the case, he would never have presented it to them nor would God have wanted to warn them.

The words "I have spent a whole life among you before this. Then, do you not use your intellect?" corroborate what is said above in such a simple yet irrefutable manner that no honest person can deny it. In this lifetime of forty years have they witnessed any dishonesty from the Prophet (sws) or any desire for leadership? Have they seen any big goals and dreams that he may have had or the will to dominate his adversaries? A person's temperament is not made in a single night nor is his character something which can remain hidden in this long period. If a person has not lied to his fraternity, how can he impute such a huge lie to God? If until then, they regarded him

9. And when Our clear revelations are recited before them, then those who do not have fear of meeting Us, say: "Bring another Qur'ān instead of this or change it." Say: What right do I have to change it from myself? I only follow the revelation that comes to me. If I disobeyed my Lord, I fear the punishment of a horrible day.

10. Say: Had God willed, I would neither have recited it to you nor would God have informed you of it. I have spent a whole life among you before this. Then, do you not use your intellect? Who will be more unjust than the person who imputes falsehood to God or denies His revelation? Indeed, the wrongdoers shall never succeed.

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to be truthful and honest (*ṣādiq* and *amīn*), how can in one night he be transformed into a liar and imposter? They should be sane in their claim and be fair and just. Stubbornness and malice should not blind them.

It is evident from this that the life of God's prophets even before they are called to office is so immaculate that their opponents can not the slightest point fingers at them. This becomes a great proof of the veracity of their claim.

The words "who will be more unjust than the person who imputes falsehood to God or denies His revelation?" refer to the Prophet's opponents in a very meaningful way. The future will decide whether he is unjust or his opponents. Here it must be kept in mind that the conflict between God's messengers and their opponents always culminates in victory for the former because they are God's representatives on earth sent to deliver justice in it. Thus this is clearly stated thus in verse 21 of Sūrah al-Mujādalah: كَتَبَ اللّٰهُ لَاَغْلِبَنَّ اَنَا وَ رُسُلِیْ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ قَوِیٌّ عَزِیْزٌ.[11]

وَ یَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا یَضُرُّهُمْ وَ لَا یَنْفَعُهُمْ وَ یَقُوْلُوْنَ هٰۤؤُلَآءِ شُفَعَآؤُنَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ؕ قُلْ اَتُنَبِّـُٔوْنَ اللّٰهَ بِمَا لَا یَعْلَمُ فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ لَا فِی الْاَرْضِ ؕ سُبْحٰنَهٗ وَ تَعٰلٰی عَمَّا یُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿۱۸﴾ وَ مَا كَانَ النَّاسُ اِلَّاۤ اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً فَاخْتَلَفُوْا ؕ وَ لَوْ لَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ لَقُضِیَ بَیْنَهُمْ فِیْمَا فِیْهِ یَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿۱۹﴾[12]

Consider the words "And they worship those besides God who can neither harm nor benefit them and say: 'They are our intercessors before God.'" They refer to the very thing that made the Quraysh of Makkah so averse to the Qur'ān and they thereby demanded an alteration in it, and also to an example of imputing falsehood to God. This is proof of the fact that they are the greatest unjust people in the eyes of God because they worship such baseless things. They contend that it is these deities who are responsible for their sustenance and livelihood in this world and if ever the hereafter comes, they will deliver them there too. It is important to note here that the people of Arabia did not regard their deities to share God's being nor did they regard any of them to be their creator or master. They only regarded them to be favoured ones of God and worshipped them on the pretext that they would intercede for them.

The sentence "say: do you wish to inform God of that which He Himself has no knowledge, neither in the heavens nor in the earth" refutes these hypothetical

11. God has decreed: "I Myself and My messengers will surely triumph." Indeed, God is Powerful and Mighty.

12. And they worship those besides God who can neither harm nor benefit them and say: "They are our intercessors before God." Say: Do you wish to inform God of that which He Himself has no knowledge, neither in the heavens nor in the earth. He is pure and exalted from what they associate as His partners. And people were in fact one community only; then they differed. And had a matter not already been decided by your Lord, the issue in which they are differing would have been decided among them.

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intercessors through a style called نفی الشیء بنفی لازمه (negating a thing by negating its consequences). There are several examples of this in classical Arabic literature. Thus Imru al-Qays' while describing a path in the desert says: لایهتدی بمناره (no guidance can be obtained from its pillars)[13] while describing a path in the desert. This actually means that these pillars and turrets do not even exist; for had they existed, guidance would have been sought from them.

Thus the implication of the sentenc of the verse under discussion is that if their associates existed, then the being who would have been most informed about them would be the one whom they are associating with. Now when He does not know it, it may well be imagined how big a lie they are imputing to God. Precisely the same topic is discussed in verse 33 of Sūrah al-Ra'd thus: وَ جَعَلُوْا لِلّٰهِ شُرَكَآءَ ؕ قُلْ سَمُّوْهُمْ ؕ اَمْ تُنَبِّـُٔوْنَهٗ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِی الْاَرْضِ اَمْ بِظَاهِرٍ مِّنَ الْقَوْلِ.[14]

The sentence "He is pure and exalted from what they associate as His partners" is not just something that absolves God from all evil attributes and traits; it also is a very big proof of polytheism. This is so because attaching an attribute to some basic attributes that negates any of them or entails any contradiction is against logic.

The sentence "and people were in fact one community only" presents historical evidence in favour of monotheism. The Almighty has always taught the same religion to people through his prophets and messengers and made them a single nation. However, people later created differences in it and formed divergent paths and became divided into many groups. In other words, if today there are various types of polytheistic and misguided sects, then it should not be concluded that they have need made by God. They have no relationship with Him. They have come into existence by misguided factions. Secondarily, this sentence also refutes the view of modern philosophers who say that mankind began with the religion of polytheism which then gradually evolved into monotheism. The Qur'ān on the contrary says that right from the beginning God taught monotheism to people. However, misguided people created differences in it and produced many diversions. I have refuted this baseless view of modern philosophy in my book *The Essence of Monotheism*.

The sentence "and had a matter not already been decided by your Lord, the issue in which they are differing would have been decided among them" implies that God has prescribed the Day of Judgement to resolve this difference. Had this not been the case, their matter would have been decided forthwith.

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13. See: Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'arab*, vol. 9, 165.

14. Then is he who will hold each person accountable [and they who have no power at all equal] and these people have made partners of God. Tell them: Speak up their names. Are you informing God of something of which He is unaware in His own earth or are you just uttering frivolous words? In fact, the scheme of these disbelievers has been made fair for them and they have been stopped from the path of the truth. And no one can guide those who God leads astray.

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Section III: Verses (20-27)

In these verses, the demand of the disbelievers to be shown punishment is referred to and answered: they demand a sign of this punishment and promise that if such a sign is shown to them, they will definitely accept faith. However, such are they that as long as they are seized by a calamity that signifies such a sign, they keep God is remembrance. But when they are given a little respite, they return to their evil ways as if nothing had happened. What good will a further sign do to such people?

Then a major misconception of the disbelievers is pointed out: if today they live in comfort and luxury, this does not mean that they are beyond God's grasp. The thunder and lightning of God's torment descend when a nation deserving punishment becomes so engrossed in its affairs that it thinks there is no danger for it from around it.

Readers may proceed to study these verses in the light of this background.

Text and Translation

وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ لَوْلَآ اُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ اٰيَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ ۚ فَقُلْ اِنَّمَا الْغَيْبُ لِلّٰهِ فَانْتَظِرُوْا ۚ اِنِّيْ مَعَكُمْ مِّنَ الْمُنْتَظِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَاِذَآ
اَذَقْنَا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ ضَرَّآءَ مَسَّتْهُمْ اِذَا لَهُمْ مَّكْرٌ فِيْٓ اٰيَاتِنَا ۭ قُلِ اللّٰهُ اَسْرَعُ مَكْرًا ۭ اِنَّ رُسُلَنَا يَكْتُبُوْنَ
مَا تَمْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ هُوَ الَّذِيْ يُسَيِّرُكُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ ۭ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا كُنْتُمْ فِي الْفُلْكِ ۚ وَجَرَيْنَ بِهِمْ بِرِيْحٍ طَيِّبَةٍ وَّفَرِحُوْا
بِهَا جَاۗءَتْهَا رِيْحٌ عَاصِفٌ وَّجَاۗءَهُمُ الْمَوْجُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَّظَنُّوْٓا اَنَّهُمْ اُحِيْطَ بِهِمْ ۙ دَعَوُا اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ الدِّيْنَ ۚ
لَىِٕنْ اَنْجَيْتَنَا مِنْ هٰذِهٖ لَنَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الشّٰكِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَلَمَّآ اَنْجٰىهُمْ اِذَا هُمْ يَبْغُوْنَ فِي الْاَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ۭ يٰٓاَيُّهَا
النَّاسُ اِنَّمَا بَغْيُكُمْ عَلٰٓى اَنْفُسِكُمْ ۙ مَّتَاعَ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۡ ثُمَّ اِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَنُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾
اِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاۗءٍ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ مِنَ السَّمَاۗءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهٖ نَبَاتُ الْاَرْضِ مِمَّا يَاْكُلُ النَّاسُ وَالْاَنْعَامُ ۭ حَتّٰٓى
اِذَآ اَخَذَتِ الْاَرْضُ زُخْرُفَهَا وَازَّيَّنَتْ وَظَنَّ اَهْلُهَآ اَنَّهُمْ قٰدِرُوْنَ عَلَيْهَآ ۙ اَتٰىهَآ اَمْرُنَا لَيْلًا اَوْ نَهَارًا فَجَعَلْنٰهَا
حَصِيْدًا كَاَنْ لَّمْ تَغْنَ بِالْاَمْسِ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَاللّٰهُ يَدْعُوْٓا اِلٰى دَارِ السَّلٰمِ ۭ وَيَهْدِيْ مَنْ
يَّشَاۗءُ اِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ لِلَّذِيْنَ اَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنٰى وَزِيَادَةٌ ۭ وَلَا يَرْهَقُ وُجُوْهَهُمْ قَتَرٌ وَّلَا ذِلَّةٌ ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ اَصْحٰبُ
الْجَنَّةِ ۚ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَسَبُوا السَّيِّاٰتِ جَزَاۗءُ سَيِّئَةٍ بِمِثْلِهَا ۙ وَتَرْهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ ۭ مَا لَهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ
مِنْ عَاصِمٍ ۚ كَاَنَّمَآ اُغْشِيَتْ وُجُوْهُهُمْ قِطَعًا مِّنَ الَّيْلِ مُظْلِمًا ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ اَصْحٰبُ النَّارِ ۚ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾

And they say that why is not a sign sent to them by their Lord. Tell them: Only God

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has knowledge of the unseen. So, wait; I am also among those waiting with you. And such is the situation of people that when We bless them with Our mercy after some difficulty they have encountered, they start to plot schemes about Our signs. Say: God is much smarter in His schemes. Our angels are writing down the schemes you are plotting. (20-21)

It is He alone Who makes you travel by land and by sea until when you are in a ship and the ships are sailing in favourable winds and people are engrossed in this, suddenly a strong wind blows and waves begin to rise on them from all sides and they think that they are about to be killed. At that time, they call God promising obedience: "If you deliver us from this calamity, we shall certainly be among Your grateful servants." Then when He delivers them, they immediately start to show rebelliousness in the land without any justification. People! None other but you will suffer the evil consequence of your rebelliousness. Benefit from the life of this world for a few days; then you have to return to Us alone. At that time, We shall tell you what you had been doing. The parable of this life of the world is that of rain We sent down from the sky; then, thick foliage sprouted from the earth because of it – those also which humans eat and those too which animals eat. Until when the earth fully embellished itself and the inhabitants of the earth thought that now they are in full control over it, suddenly Our wrath descended on it by night or by day. And We decimated it in such a manner as if nothing was there yesterday. In this manner do We explain Our signs for those who reflect. (22-24)

And God calls you to the abode of peace and guides whomsoever He wants to the straight path. Those who did good deeds, for them is good reward and more to it as well. And neither blackness will overspread their faces nor humiliation. It is they who are the people of Paradise. They shall remain in it forever. And those who have earned vices, then the recompense of a vice is equal to it. And humiliation shall overspread them. None will be able to save them from God. It will be as if their faces have been covered with pieces of a dark night. It is these people who are the companions of Hell. They shall abide in it forever. (25-27)

Explanation

وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ لَوْلَآ اُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ اٰيَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ ۚ فَقُلْ اِنَّمَا الْغَيْبُ لِلّٰهِ فَانْتَظِرُوْا ۚ اِنِّيْ مَعَكُمْ مِّنَ الْمُنْتَظِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾[15]

It is evident from concomitant indications that the word "sign" here refers to "sign of punishment." The Qur'ān was informing them of two punishments: one that they would face in this world if they denied their messenger and second what they would face in the hereafter if they did not profess faith. This information dealt a hard blow on the arrogance of the Quraysh leadership. It was one of the things because of which they wanted to have the Qur'ān altered or some amendment be made to it. In this

15. And they say that why is not a sign sent to them by their Lord. Tell them: Only God has knowledge of the unseen. So, wait; I am also among those waiting with you.

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regard in order to corner the Prophet (sws), they demanded from him a sample of this vehemently proclaimed punishment if he was truthful in his claim. In response, it was communicated to them through his tongue that it was not his prerogative to bring punishment. It is God Who has informed them of this punishment and he was only warning them of it. As far as the time and nature of this punishment was concerned, only God knows such matters of the unknown; they should wait for it to arrive and so will he. This does not imply that the Prophet (sws) was desirous of his people to be punished. On the contrary, prophets of God try their utmost to save their people from such punishment. However, when because of stubbornness, a nation is guilty of all those grounds which make it worthy of punishment, it is but natural for a prophet to have fear of its sudden arrival. This wait for him carries sorrow and yearning for his nation rather than any wish or desire for their punishment.

وَاِذَآ اَذَقْنَا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ ضَرَّآءَ مَسَّتْهُمْ اِذَا لَهُمْ مَّكْرٌ فِيْٓ اٰيَاتِنَا ؕ قُلِ اللّٰهُ اَسْرَعُ مَكْرًا ؕ اِنَّ رُسُلَنَا يَكْتُبُوْنَ مَا تَمْكُرُوْنَ ﴿۲۱﴾[16]

Here the words used are general but they refer to the Quraysh. This style of address expresses God's aversion for them. It also shows that no different is the state of other people. Only those who earn God's favour adopt a different attitude. As for others, as soon as they come out from their trial, their leaders fashion all kinds of philosophies to blunt its impact. They plot different schemes and end up in their previous negligence and lead their nation into it too.

Research on the word مَكْر has been presented under verse 54 of Sūrah Āl-i 'Imrān. It refers to a hidden plot. One such plot hatched by the disbelievers against the signs of God is mentioned in the verse next verse in the words: If you deliver us from this calamity, we shall certainly be among Your grateful servants. Then when He delivers them, they immediately start to show rebelliousness in the land without any justification.

The second example of this is mentioned in verse 95 of Sūrah al-A'rāf. Ie. against their own conscience their leaders in order to assure and comfort their followers state that such good and bad circumstances are encountered by nations. They state this philosophy of history to tell them that their own ancestors faced such circumstances and they too are facing them now. Why should they be given such importance so as to regard them from God as a warning or because of their wrong beliefs? This according to them was baseless.

When the word مَكْر is used for God, it refers to a hidden scheme and I have

16. And such is the situation of people that when We bless them with Our mercy after some difficulty they have encountered, they start to plot schemes about Our signs. Say: God is much smarter in His schemes. Our angels are writing down the schemes you are plotting.

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mentioned its various aspects under the afore-referred to verse of Sūrah Āl-i ‘Imrān.

The verse means that they should scheme as much as they want to. If God has given them respite, it is because He does not need to spend time to have His scheme implemented. It manifests itself in the blink of an eye. Moreover, so all-embracing it is that no one can save himself from it. All their deeds are being recorded by angels and nothing is hidden from God. When the time comes, they will be seized forthwith and they would be helpless.

هُوَ الَّذِیْ یُسَیِّرُكُمْ فِی الْبَرِّ وَ الْبَحْرِ ؕ حَتّٰۤی اِذَا كُنْتُمْ فِی الْفُلْكِ ۚ وَ جَرَیْنَ بِهِمْ بِرِیْحٍ طَیِّبَةٍ وَّ فَرِحُوْا بِهَا جَآءَتْهَا رِیْحٌ عَاصِفٌ وَّ جَآءَهُمُ الْمَوْجُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَّ ظَنُّوْۤا اَنَّهُمْ اُحِیْطَ بِهِمْ ۙ۬ دَعَوُا اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصِیْنَ لَهُ الدِّیْنَ ۚ۬ لَىِٕنْ اَنْجَیْتَنَا مِنْ هٰذِهٖ لَنَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الشّٰكِرِیْنَ ﴿۲۲﴾ فَلَمَّاۤ اَنْجٰىهُمْ اِذَا هُمْ یَبْغُوْنَ فِی الْاَرْضِ بِغَیْرِ الْحَقِّ ؕ یٰۤاَیُّهَا النَّاسُ اِنَّمَا بَغْیُكُمْ عَلٰۤی اَنْفُسِكُمْ ۙ۬ مَّتَاعَ الْحَیٰوةِ الدُّنْیَا ۫ ثُمَّ اِلَیْنَا مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَنُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿۲۳﴾[17]

The word تسییر means “to set something in motion.” Here it refers to embark on a journey. All means and resources have been created by God and the knack and sagacity to invent the means to travel by land and sea is also in fact God-given. Hence the verse refers to God as the cause of all these things so that people are able to look beyond the apparent.

The word فُلْك means “ship” and is used as a singular and a plural as well as a masculine and a feminine. Here it is use in the plural sense in the word جَرَیْنَ.

The expression رِیْحٌ طَیِّبَةٌ means “a favourable wind.” Its converse mentioned right after is رِیْحٌ عَاصِفٌ which is used for a stormy wind. In the earlier part of the verse, the address was direct; here it has become indirect. This is because it is a parable and for a parable indirect address is more appropriate.

Consider next the sentence “People! None other but you will suffer the evil consequence of your rebelliousness.” The cause of rebelliousness is arrogance and such arrogance can only befit him who has a share in creation of this universe and its governance. As for those who are themselves created and need the creator’s mercy in everything, what right do they have to be arrogant? Hence, such rebelliousness has no

17. It is He alone Who makes you travel by land and by sea until when you are in a ship and the ships are sailing in favourable winds and people are engrossed in this, suddenly a strong wind blows and waves begin to rise on them from all sides and they think that they are about to be killed. At that time, they call God promising obedience: “If you deliver us from this calamity, we shall certainly be among Your grateful servants.” Then when He delivers them, they immediately start to show rebelliousness in the land without any justification. People! None other but you will suffer the evil consequence of your rebelliousness. Benefit from the life of this world for a few days; then you have to return to Us alone. At that time, We shall tell you what you had been doing.

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justification.

In this sentence, the Quraysh are actually addressed and the word مَّتَاعَ is in the accusative because of a suppressed verb.

Once these components of the verse have been explained, readers may now reflect on the meaning of the verses. It was stated earlier in verse 21: "And such is the situation of people that when We bless them with Our mercy after some difficulty they have encountered, they start to plot schemes about Our signs." A common example of what is stated here as a principle is then given by referring to the sailing of a ship. The implication is that no different is the case with those who are demanding punishment. At this time, their ship of life is comfortably sailing in favourable winds. Hence, they are deeply engrossed in their pranks. When God's messenger warns them of His punishment, they are not able to understand why it would come and from where it would descend on them. Thus they stubbornly challenge him. But when they will be seized, they will cry out in repentance. However, this state of repentance will only continue as long as they face the trial at hand. As soon as they are delivered from it, they will return to their evil ways: they will show the same arrogance and think that there is none who can seize them again. The purpose is to convey the fact that no one should think that any warning can benefit such people. The rust that has settled on their hearts cannot be dissolved in any way. Such hard-hearted people are only consigned to God's punishment.

After the parable, the Quraysh are once again addressed by in a very stern manner by the words: "People! None other but you will suffer the evil consequence of your rebelliousness." Their tyranny will only hasten God's conclusive communication of the truth on them and the more rebelliousness they show the closer they will come to God's punishment.

اِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَآءٍ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهٖ نَبَاتُ الْاَرْضِ مِمَّا يَاْكُلُ النَّاسُ وَ الْاَنْعَامُ ؕ حَتّٰٓى اِذَآ اَخَذَتِ الْاَرْضُ زُخْرُفَهَا وَ ازَّيَّنَتْ وَ ظَنَّ اَهْلُهَآ اَنَّهُمْ قٰدِرُوْنَ عَلَيْهَآ ۙ اَتٰىهَآ اَمْرُنَا لَيْلًا اَوْ نَهَارًا فَجَعَلْنٰهَا حَصِيْدًا كَاَنْ لَّمْ تَغْنَ بِالْاَمْسِ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿۲۴﴾[18]

This is a parable of the life of this world referred to as "benefit from the life of this world for a few days" in the previous verse. The disbelievers were lured away by it and considered it so secure that they were not prepared to accept that it could end some day.

18. The parable of this life of the world is that of rain We sent down from the sky; then, thick foliage sprouted from the earth because of it – those also which humans eat and those too which animals eat. Until when the earth fully embellished itself and the inhabitants of the earth thought that now they are in full control over it, suddenly Our wrath descended on it by night or by day. And We decimated it in such a manner as if nothing was there yesterday. In this manner do We explain Our signs for those who reflect.

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The word إختلاط means the intermingling and intertwining of something. It signifies the lushness of vegetation and crops. This is because when conducive rain falls on them, they become thick and closely-knitted.

The word زُخرُف means embellishment and beauty. From here it came to be used for multifarious vegetation. The verbs إِزَّيَّنَ and تَزَيَّنَ denote the same meaning.

The word اَمر here refers to divine punishment.

The verse means that the disbelievers should not challenge God while being inebriated with the comfort and security of life. Just as they see that at times when rain descends, crops grow and orchards become fruit-laden and their owners, as a result, are elated; then suddenly God's wrath visits it and turns it into rubble and debris. In a similar way, His order to punish them will be given right when they would think that they are in their prime. It will catch them unaware and they will not be able to do anything. If they want to see a sign of punishment, God is describing to them signs which appear before them every now and then. Those who can reflect should do so. Sensible is the person who learns from the fate of others not when he himself helplessly faces it. In verses 17-26 of Sūrah al-Qalam, the parable of the orchard owners is described precisely for this reason.

Also evident from this detail is that nations to whom the truth is conclusively communicated are seized by God right in their prime and at their pinnacle. This is because the real importance before Him is that of faith and deeds and not of material resources. If a nation has become morally bankrupt, then such resources instead of supporting it hasten its downfall.

وَاللّٰهُ يَدْعُوْٓا اِلٰى دَارِ السَّلٰمِ ؕ وَيَهْدِيْ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ اِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ لِلَّذِيْنَ اَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنٰى وَزِيَادَةٌ ؕ وَلَا يَرْهَقُ وُجُوْهَهُمْ قَتَرٌ وَّلَا ذِلَّةٌ ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ الْجَنَّةِ ۚ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَسَبُوا السَّيِّاٰتِ جَزَآءُ سَيِّئَةٍ بِمِثْلِهَا ۙ وَتَرْهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ ؕ مَا لَهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ عَاصِمٍ ۚ كَاَنَّمَآ اُغْشِيَتْ وُجُوْهُهُمْ قِطَعًا مِّنَ الَّيْلِ مُظْلِمًا ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ النَّارِ ۚ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾[19]

The abode of peace refers to Paradise because that is the only place where a person will neither have any regret of the past nor fear of the future: he will be in eternal comfort and peace. Using the word "peace" has a special significance for the world in which the disbelievers are engrossed. This world is under God's grasp at all times; however, He is calling them to the abode of peace.

19. And God calls you to the abode of peace and guides whomsoever He wants to the straight path. Those who did good deeds, for them is good reward and more to it as well. And neither blackness will overspread their faces nor humiliation. It is they who are the people of Paradise. They shall remain in it forever. And those who have earned vices, then the recompense of a vice is equal to it. And humiliation shall overspread them. None will be able to save them from God. It will be as if their faces have been covered with pieces of a dark night. It is these people who are the companions of Hell. They shall abide in it forever.

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The expression "guides whomsoever He wants to the straight path" means that God guides those who are worthy of it as per His established practice, which itself is based on justice.

The reward in the words "more to it as well" is not explained here. However, in verse 160 of Sūrah al-An'ām, it is explained that one good deed will entail ten times its reward.

The verb رهق means "to overspread" and قتر refers to the blackness of dust. Here concomitant indications show that this blackness is the one that overspreads a person's face when he has totally lost hope.

Here the purpose of what is negated is to affirm its opposite. In other words, their faces will be shinning bright and fresh and at every step they will be treated with respect and honour.

The words "the recompense of a vice is equal to it; and humiliation shall overspread them; none will be able to save them from God" describe the fate of the evil-doers. Blackness is not mentioned with humiliation here. It is actually mentioned in the form of a parable by the words "their faces have been covered with pieces of a dark night." This shows blackness here refers to the blackness of hopelessness and because this blackness will be because of eternal helplessness, it will appear as if pieces of dark night have been sliced one by one and placed on their faces. The sentence "none will be able to save them from God" is actually a parenthetical one. In other words, there will be none there to save them from eternal hopelessness and humiliation. All expectations of help and intercession from deities they had worshipped will be dashed to ground. None of them will be of any avail to them.

Section IV: Verses (28-36)

Earlier in verse 19, it was stated: "None will be able to save them from God" implying that no one among their alleged deities and intercessors would be able to save them from eternal hopelessness and humiliation. In the coming verses, this fate they will encounter in the hereafter is described in detail. Also elucidated is the fact how castles of desires built in the air on mere conjecture are razed to ground.

Readers may now proceed to study these verses.

Text and Translation

وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيْعًا ثُمَّ نَقُوْلُ لِلَّذِيْنَ اَشْرَكُوْا مَكَانَكُمْ اَنْتُمْ وَشُرَكَآؤُكُمْ ۚ فَزَيَّلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَقَالَ شُرَكَآؤُهُمْ
مَّا كُنْتُمْ اِيَّانَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ فَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ شَهِيْدًا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ اِنْ كُنَّا عَنْ عِبَادَتِكُمْ لَغٰفِلِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾
هُنَالِكَ تَبْلُوْا كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّآ اَسْلَفَتْ وَرُدُّوْٓا اِلَى اللّٰهِ مَوْلٰىهُمُ الْحَقِّ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ قُلْ

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مَنْ يَّرْزُقُكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ وَ الْاَرْضِ اَمَّنْ يَّمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَ الْاَبْصَارَ وَ مَنْ يُّخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَ يُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَ مَنْ يُّدَبِّرُ الْاَمْرَ ؕ فَسَيَقُوْلُوْنَ اللّٰهُ ۚ فَقُلْ اَفَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿۳۱﴾ فَذٰلِكُمُ اللّٰهُ رَبُّكُمُ الْحَقُّ ۚ فَمَا ذَا بَعْدَ الْحَقِّ اِلَّا الضَّلٰلُ ۖۚ فَاَنّٰى تُصْرَفُوْنَ ﴿۳۲﴾ كَذٰلِكَ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ فَسَقُوْٓا اَنَّهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿۳۳﴾ قُلْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَآئِكُمْ مَّنْ يَّبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهٗ ؕ قُلِ اللّٰهُ يَبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهٗ فَاَنّٰى تُؤْفَكُوْنَ ﴿۳۴﴾ قُلْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَآئِكُمْ مَّنْ يَّهْدِيْٓ اِلَى الْحَقِّ ؕ قُلِ اللّٰهُ يَهْدِيْ لِلْحَقِّ ؕ اَفَمَنْ يَّهْدِيْٓ اِلَى الْحَقِّ اَحَقُّ اَنْ يُّتَّبَعَ اَمَّنْ لَّا يَهِدِّيْٓ اِلَّآ اَنْ يُّهْدٰى ۚ فَمَا لَكُمْ ۫ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُوْنَ ﴿۳۵﴾ وَ مَا يَتَّبِعُ اَكْثَرُهُمْ اِلَّا ظَنًّا ؕ اِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِيْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْـًٔا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِمَا يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿۳۶﴾

And bear in mind the day when We shall gather everyone; then We shall order those guilty of polytheism: “Keep to your place you and the partners you associated with God.” Then We will alienate them from one another, and their associates with God will say: “You would not worship us. Sufficient is God as a witness between us and you. We remained totally unaware of your worship.” At that time, each person will encounter his deeds he would have done. And people will appear before their true master and the deities they had falsely invented will all vanish. (28-30)

Ask them: Who provides you with sustenance from the heavens and the earth? Or: In whose control are the faculties of sight and hearing? And who is it that brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living? And who governs the whole universe? Then they shall reply: “God.” So, tell them: Do you not fear that God? Thus, it is that God Who is your true Lord. Then what is there after truth except going astray? Hence, where does your intellect turn away to? In this way, the word of your Lord has become true for the defiant that they will not accept faith. (31-33)

Ask: Is there anyone among the partners you associate with God who creates the first time, then will do it again? Say: It is only God Who creates the first time. Then He will do it again. So, where do you wander away? Ask: Is there anyone from your associates who guides towards the truth? Say: It is God alone Who guides towards the truth. Then is he worthy of being followed who guides towards the truth or those who cannot find the way unless they themselves are guided? So what has come over you? What kind of a judgement do you make? And most of them are following mere conjecture and conjecture cannot the slightest take the place of the truth. And God fully knows whatever they are doing. (34-36)

Explanation

وَ يَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيْعًا ثُمَّ نَقُوْلُ لِلَّذِيْنَ اَشْرَكُوْا مَكَانَكُمْ اَنْتُمْ وَ شُرَكَآؤُكُمْ ۚ فَزَيَّلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَ قَالَ شُرَكَآؤُهُمْ مَّا كُنْتُمْ اِيَّانَا

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تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿۲۸﴾ فَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ شَهِيْدًا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ اِنْ كُنَّا عَنْ عِبَادَتِكُمْ لَغٰفِلِيْنَ ﴿۲۹﴾[20]

The emphasis sounded by the word "everyone" in the sentence "and bear in mind the day when We shall gather everyone" implies that God will gather the deities and associates together with those who worshipped them and regarded them to be their intercessors.

In the sentence ثُمَّ نَقُوْلُ لِلَّذِيْنَ اَشْرَكُوْا مَكَانَكُمْ اَنْتُمْ وَ شُرَكَآؤُكُمْ the verb أمكثوا or قفوا some other similar one that means "stay at your place" has been suppressed. In Arabic, when the instance is to comply to an immediate or obligatory directive, then the verb is suppressed before its locus or object so that all the attention of the addressee is focused on the command. The verb فَزَيَّلْنَا explains the purpose of this stay. The participle تزييل means "to create distance" or "to alienate." It is explained in the Q ur'ān at some places that the polytheists will be alienated from their deities and the latter will declare their acquittal from the former. In fact, they will swear that they were never aware of this worship. Thus, for example, verses 166-167 of Sūrah al-Baqarah and verse 94 of Sūrah al-An'ām, can be looked up. The words "you would not worship us" of these deities in the verse under discussion form this acquittal. It will humiliate their worshippers before everyone. They would have hoped that those whom they had worshipped all their lives and dedicated their vows and sacrifices to would now be able to save them. But before they even they made this request, the deities will swear that they never even knew of this worship.

The expression فَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ شَهِيْدًا signifies an oath and the اِنْ in اِنْ كُنَّا is the shortened from of اِنَّ. The *lām* appended to لَغٰفِلِيْنَ is an indication to this.

هُنَالِكَ تَبْلُوْا كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّآ اَسْلَفَتْ وَرُدُّوْٓا اِلَى اللّٰهِ مَوْلٰىهُمُ الْحَقِّ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿۳۰﴾[21]

The verb بلا يبلو means "to evaluate and to experience." The implication is that the idolaters believe that if ever the Day of Judgemet will come, their deities will save them from punishment whatever their deeds. However, there everyone will face their deeds. The idolaters would be expecting their deities to welcome them there but all these deities whom they had fabricated by imputing falsehood to God would vanish. Everyone will appear before God, their real master. The word "*mawlā*" translated as master actually means "someone to whom everyone returns." The expression "true

20. And bear in mind the day when We shall gather everyone; then We shall order those guilty of polytheism: "Keep to your place you and the partners you associated with God." Then We will alienate them from one another, and their associates with God will say: "You would not worship us. Sufficient is God as a witness between us and you. We remained totally unaware of your worship."

21. At that time, each person will encounter his deeds he would have done. And people will appear before their true master and the deities they had falsely invented will all vanish.

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master" is used in contrast to their hypothetical deities, which obviously do not exist.

قُلْ مَنْ يَّرْزُقُكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ وَالْاَرْضِ اَمَّنْ يَّمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالْاَبْصَارَ وَمَنْ يُّخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَمَنْ يُّدَبِّرُ الْاَمْرَ ؕ فَسَيَقُوْلُوْنَ اللّٰهُ ۚ فَقُلْ اَفَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿۳۱﴾ فَذٰلِكُمُ اللّٰهُ رَبُّكُمُ الْحَقُّ ۚ فَمَاذَا بَعْدَ الْحَقِّ اِلَّا الضَّلٰلُ ۚۖ فَاَنّٰى تُصْرَفُوْنَ ﴿۳۲﴾[22]

It has been explained in detail that the Arabs would regard God to be the real creator, master and governor of this universe. However, at the same time, they associated partners with God. Regarding the deities they worshipped, they never believed that they were the creators of the heavens or the earth or the sun and the moon or give life or death or have a share in the governance of the universe. About them, they only believed that they were favoured creatures of God. They were able to convince God to do what they wanted. So, if they could be made happy, they could intercede for them before God and make Him grant them the favours of life. Moreover, if ever they would be raised to life in the hereafter and be called to account, these deities would help them. Not only will they earn forgiveness for them but also make God grant them high ranks there. The Qur'ān by regarding these acknowledged views of the idolaters as their fundamental beliefs has warned them that if they accept all these things, they neither have any option of denying the hereafter nor any grounds to associate partners with God. When it is God Who brings forth the living from the dead and vice versa and governance and planning is in His hands, what need does He have to make partners? What difficulty does He have to re-create mankind after its death? In other words, these notions that they have belie their own universally acknowledged facts. They in fact deny their own selves.

The expression "Do you not fear that God?" means that if they have all these beliefs, do they not fear the wrath of God since they attribute baseless things to Him and negate all His high attributes.

The demonstrative pronoun ذٰلِكُمُ refers to these high attributes which the Arabs not only acknowledged but were true as well. The logical result of this acknowledgement should have been to accept the God Who has these attributes to be their Lord. But, on the contrary, they have made other entities as Lord too. Thus denying the truth that is now fully apparent is like going deep into error. The passive verb تُصْرَفُوْنَ shows that logic and intellect are against what they do. They should think in whose hands have they given their rein? Who is making them wander here and there?

This explanation of the verse is very clear. However, since people are generally poorly informed about the beliefs and idols of the Arabs, it may well be that one thing

22. Ask them: Who provides you with sustenance from the heavens and the earth? Or: In whose control are the faculties of sight and hearing? And who is it that brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living? And who governs the whole universe? Then they shall reply: "God." So, tell them: Do you not fear that God? Thus, it is that God Who is your true Lord. Then what is there after truth except going astray? Hence, where does your intellect turn away to?

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may create doubt in their mind viz a viz this explanation. Here I will briefly refer to it and try to elucidate it.

The beliefs of the Arabs recorded in history show that they regarded God to not only be the creator and sustainer, giver of sense and reason to human beings as well as life and death but also the being who governs and administers the universe. In my opinion, this view is correct. The Arabs never regarded their deities to be those who administered the universe. They actually thought that just as kings depute some of their tasks and duties to their favoured ones, God too had done so. Though these tasks and duties actually are His prerogative and under His control, practically these favoured ones also enjoy them. In a similar way, these alleged duties have control over some prerogatives of God. Examples are granting sustenance and children to people. The Qur'ān has refuted this concept at a number of places. I have referred to this in detail in my treatise "Essence of Polytheism and Monotheism."

It is evident from these details that there is not much difference between the idolaters of these times and those of the Arabs. In order, to prove that our polytheistic practices are actually monotheistic, we have vehemently condemned the polytheism of the Arabs. The fact is that both are the same.

كَذٰلِكَ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ فَسَقُوْٓا اَنَّهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ [23]

The words "in this way" refer to the contradictory attitude of the idolaters mentioned above. The expression "word of God" refers to the established practice of God prescribed by Him about giving guidance. He guides only those who use their faculties of heart and mind. The defiant who ignore them and become engrossed in their desires are lead away by Him. In a similar way, these idolaters too have gone far astray and they will not accept faith. In verse 26 of Sūrah al-Baqarah, this established practice of God is stated in the words: "He only leads astray the defiant."

The verse under discussion addresses the Prophet (sws). It assures him and informs him that these people are facing God's established law and practice. After he has communicated the truth to them, his responsibility towards them has ended.

قُلْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَآئِكُمْ مَّنْ يَّبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهٗ ۭ قُلِ اللّٰهُ يَبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهٗ فَاَنّٰى تُؤْفَكُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ [24]

This verse refutes the view of the idolaters that if ever the Day of Judgement comes, their deities and intercessors will save them from God's grasp. It is known that these idolaters ever explicitly denied the Day of Judgement. They were hesitant and reluctant

23. In this way, the word of your Lord has become true for the defiant that they will not accept faith.

24. Ask: Is there anyone among the partners you associate with God who creates the first time, then will do it again? Say: It is only God Who creates the first time. Then He will do it again. So, where do you wander away?

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in this regard. They regarded being raised up to life after death to be a far-fetched thing. As a result, they contended that in the first place, there will be no such day and if ever it comes, their deities and intercessors will save them. Precisely because of this belief, God has posed the question stated in the verse. The implication is that if as per their own belief it is only God Who has created the first time and He will do it again and their own deities do not have any share in both these creations, then it is obvious that their return will only be towards God. Thus only He will take account from them. But after acknowledging the correct premise, the conclusion they draw is so contradictory. This shows that something is really wrong with their intellect.

قُلْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَآئِكُمْ مَّنْ يَّهْدِيْٓ اِلَى الْحَقِّ ؕ قُلِ اللّٰهُ يَهْدِيْ لِلْحَقِّ ؕ اَفَمَنْ يَّهْدِيْٓ اِلَى الْحَقِّ اَحَقُّ اَنْ يُّتَّبَعَ اَمَّنْ لَّا يَهِدِّيْٓ اِلَّآ اَنْ يُّهْدٰى ۚ فَمَا لَكُمْ ۫ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُوْنَ ﴿۳۵﴾[25]

In the matter of the hereafter, the existence of their deities has proven to be fruitless since they have no say in creating them the first time nor again when the hereafter comes. They should now think what benefit they earn from them in this world. One important need of creatures is that their creator should guide them regarding good and evil in the affairs of life. Can they claim that their deities provide this guidance? Is their intellect something that these deities have given them? Do these deities send divine revelation to them? Have they revealed some book to them to guide and purify them or sent a messenger to them with the *sharī'ah*? If they have not done any of these, or are not doing any of these and will never do any of these in future, then why are they following them? Only that being is worthy of being followed who guides people to the truth or gives people the urge to follow it, not those who are in need of being guided themselves. What an illogical attitude they have adopted!

In the verse under discussion both لِ and اِلَى are used as prepositions with هدی. In my opinion, there is a slight difference in this usage. When the latter preposition is used, it means to only guide someone to something. With the latter, an additional meaning of urging towards guidance is also added to it.

Te word يَهِدِّيْٓ is actually يَهتدِيْٓ. As per the rule of assimilation (*idghām*) ت has been transformed into د.

وَمَا يَتَّبِعُ اَكْثَرُهُمْ اِلَّا ظَنًّا ؕ اِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِيْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْـًٔا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِمَا يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿۳۶﴾[26]

The word ظَنّ is an opposite to all three words يقين, علم and حق.

25. Ask: Is there anyone from your associates who guides towards the truth? Say: It is God alone Who guides towards the truth. Then is he worthy of being followed who guides towards the truth or those who cannot find the way unless they themselves are guided? So what has come over you? What kind of a judgement do you make?

26. And most of them are following mere conjecture and conjecture cannot the slightest take the place of the truth. And God fully knows whatever they are doing.

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The words "and God fully knows whatever they are doing" sound an assurance to the prophet and a warning to his opponents. They have shut their eyes to the truth but soon God will inform them of their deeds. It may be kept in mind that the Qur'ān has described the majority of these people in these words. All were not the same. There were some among them who were sensible. They are mentioned ahead in verses 42-43 ahead.

Section V: Verses (37-70)

Readers may remember that in the earlier verses the disbelievers had demanded a new Qur'ān in place of this one or have it altered to suit their desires. Instead of fulfilling their demand, God further explained to them the things they were averse to. Now this same topic is taken up from another angle and it is proven that the Qur'ān is the book of God and the Prophet (sws) and his companions are given assurance and some of the claims of the Qur'ān are further substantiated.

Readers may proceed to study these verses now in the light of this background.

Text and Translation

وَمَا كَانَ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنُ اَنْ يُّفْتَرٰى مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَلٰكِنْ تَصْدِيْقَ الَّذِيْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيْلَ الْكِتٰبِ لَا رَيْبَ
فِيْهِ مِنْ رَّبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ اَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ افْتَرٰىهُ ؕ قُلْ فَاْتُوْا بِسُوْرَةٍ مِّثْلِهٖ وَادْعُوْا مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اِنْ
كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ بَلْ كَذَّبُوْا بِمَا لَمْ يُحِيْطُوْا بِعِلْمِهٖ وَلَمَّا يَاْتِهِمْ تَاْوِيْلُهٗ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ كَذَّبَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يُّؤْمِنُ بِهٖ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ لَّا يُؤْمِنُ بِهٖ ؕ وَرَبُّكَ اَعْلَمُ
بِالْمُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَاِنْ كَذَّبُوْكَ فَقُلْ لِّيْ عَمَلِيْ وَلَكُمْ عَمَلُكُمْ ۚ اَنْتُمْ بَرِيْٓـُٔوْنَ مِمَّآ اَعْمَلُ وَاَنَا بَرِيْٓءٌ مِّمَّا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾
وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَّسْتَمِعُوْنَ اِلَيْكَ ؕ اَفَاَنْتَ تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ وَلَوْ كَانُوْا لَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَّنْظُرُ اِلَيْكَ ؕ اَفَاَنْتَ
تَهْدِي الْعُمْيَ وَلَوْ كَانُوْا لَا يُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْـًٔا وَّلٰكِنَّ النَّاسَ اَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَيَوْمَ
يَحْشُرُهُمْ كَاَنْ لَّمْ يَلْبَثُوْٓا اِلَّا سَاعَةً مِّنَ النَّهَارِ يَتَعَارَفُوْنَ بَيْنَهُمْ ؕ قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِلِقَآءِ اللّٰهِ وَمَا كَانُوْا
مُهْتَدِيْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَاِمَّا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِيْ نَعِدُهُمْ اَوْ نَتَوَفَّيَنَّكَ فَاِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ ثُمَّ اللّٰهُ شَهِيْدٌ عَلٰى مَا
يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَلِكُلِّ اُمَّةٍ رَّسُوْلٌ ۚ فَاِذَا جَآءَ رَسُوْلُهُمْ قُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ مَتٰى
هٰذَا الْوَعْدُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ قُلْ لَّآ اَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِيْ ضَرًّا وَّلَا نَفْعًا اِلَّا مَا شَآءَ اللّٰهُ ؕ لِكُلِّ اُمَّةٍ اَجَلٌ ؕ اِذَا جَآءَ
اَجَلُهُمْ فَلَا يَسْتَاْخِرُوْنَ سَاعَةً وَّلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُوْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ اِنْ اَتٰىكُمْ عَذَابُهٗ بَيَاتًا اَوْ نَهَارًا مَّاذَا

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يَسْتَعْجِلُ مِنْهُ الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ اَثُمَّ اِذَا مَا وَقَعَ اٰمَنْتُمْ بِهٖ ؕ آٰلْـٰٔنَ وَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ بِهٖ تَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَ ﴿٥١﴾ ثُمَّ قِيْلَ
لِلَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا ذُوْقُوْا عَذَابَ الْخُلْدِ ۚ هَلْ تُجْزَوْنَ اِلَّا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَيَسْتَنْۢبِـُٔوْنَكَ اَحَقٌّ هُوَ ؕ قُلْ اِيْ
وَرَبِّيْٓ اِنَّهٗ لَحَقٌّ ۚ وَمَآ اَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِيْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَلَوْ اَنَّ لِكُلِّ نَفْسٍ ظَلَمَتْ مَا فِي الْاَرْضِ لَافْتَدَتْ بِهٖ ؕ وَاَسَرُّوا
النَّدَامَةَ لَمَّا رَاَوُا الْعَذَابَ ۚ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ اَلَآ اِنَّ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ اَلَآ
اِنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ وَّلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ هُوَ يُحْيٖ وَيُمِيْتُ وَاِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَآءَتْكُمْ
مَّوْعِظَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَآءٌ لِّمَا فِي الصُّدُوْرِ ۙ وَهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللّٰهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهٖ فَبِذٰلِكَ
فَلْيَفْرَحُوْا ؕ هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ مَّآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ مِّنْ رِّزْقٍ فَجَعَلْتُمْ مِّنْهُ حَرَامًا وَّحَلٰلًا ؕ
قُلْ آٰللّٰهُ اَذِنَ لَكُمْ اَمْ عَلَى اللّٰهِ تَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَمَا ظَنُّ الَّذِيْنَ يَفْتَرُوْنَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ الْكَذِبَ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
لَذُوْ فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَمَا تَكُوْنُ فِيْ شَاْنٍ وَّمَا تَتْلُوْا مِنْهُ مِنْ قُرْاٰنٍ وَّلَا
تَعْمَلُوْنَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ اِلَّا كُنَّا عَلَيْكُمْ شُهُوْدًا اِذْ تُفِيْضُوْنَ فِيْهِ ؕ وَمَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْ رَّبِّكَ مِنْ مِّثْقَالِ ذَرَّةٍ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَلَا
فِي السَّمَآءِ وَلَآ اَصْغَرَ مِنْ ذٰلِكَ وَلَآ اَكْبَرَ اِلَّا فِيْ كِتٰبٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٦١﴾ اَلَآ اِنَّ اَوْلِيَآءَ اللّٰهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ
يَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَكَانُوْا يَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ لَهُمُ الْبُشْرٰى فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْاٰخِرَةِ ؕ لَا تَبْدِيْلَ لِكَلِمٰتِ
اللّٰهِ ؕ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَلَا يَحْزُنْكَ قَوْلُهُمْ ۘ اِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلّٰهِ جَمِيْعًا ؕ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٦٥﴾ اَلَآ اِنَّ لِلّٰهِ
مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ ؕ وَمَا يَتَّبِعُ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ شُرَكَآءَ ؕ اِنْ يَّتَّبِعُوْنَ اِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَاِنْ
هُمْ اِلَّا يَخْرُصُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ هُوَ الَّذِيْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الَّيْلَ لِتَسْكُنُوْا فِيْهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ
يَّسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللّٰهُ وَلَدًا سُبْحٰنَهٗ ؕ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ ؕ لَهٗ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ؕ اِنْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِّنْ
سُلْطٰنٍ بِهٰذَا ؕ اَتَقُوْلُوْنَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ قُلْ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَفْتَرُوْنَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ الْكَذِبَ لَا يُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾
مَتَاعٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ اِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ ثُمَّ نُذِيْقُهُمُ الْعَذَابَ الشَّدِيْدَ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾

This Qur'ān is not something that can be authored without God. In fact, it is a validation of the predictions that are present before it and details the Book. There is no doubt that it is from the Lord of the Universe. Do they say: "He has fabricated it?" Tell them: If you are truthful, bring forth a *sūrah* like it and call whoever you can except God. No, this is not the case. In fact, these people are denying what their knowledge

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could not grasp and whose reality is not evident to them as yet. Those before them had also denied similarly. Then observe the fate these unjust people met. (37-39)

And there are those among them also who believe in the Qur'ān and your Lord is fully aware of those who spread disorder. And if they reject you, say: For me are my deeds and for you yours. You have no responsibility of my deeds and I have no responsibility of yours. There are those among them also who intently listen to you. So, will you make the deaf listen if they understand nothing? And there are those among them also who turn their attention towards you. So, will you show the way to the blind even if they see nothing? God is not the slightest unjust to people; in fact, people are unjust to themselves. (40-44)

And the day God will gather them they will feel that they stayed for only a short period of a day. They would recognize one another. Great was the loss incurred by those who denied the meeting with God and did not adopt the right path. Either We shall show you a part of what We are promising them or give death to you. Thus, they have to return to Us. Then God is a witness to what they are doing. And for every nation there is a messenger. Then, when their messenger arrives, their fate is justly decided and no injustice is done to them. And they say: "When will this promise be fulfilled, if you are truthful?" Tell them: I do not have any authority regarding any benefit or harm for even my own self except what God wills. For each nation, there is a period fixed. When that time arrives, they are not advanced in time or deferred for a moment. Tell them: Speak up! If God's torment visits you any time in the day or night, what is the basis on which the wrongdoers want to hurry it on? Then will you only believe when it appears? Now you have believed! You were calling to hasten it. Then, it will be said to these unjust: "Taste eternal torment now; this is the recompense of your earning." (45-52)

They ask you: "Is this really a truth?" Say: Yes, by my Lord! this is certain and you will not be able to escape. And if every soul that has been unjust is given all that is in the earth, it will want to give it in ransom and they will regret when they will see the torment. And they shall be fairly judged and no injustice shall they suffer. Listen! Whatever is in the heavens and the earth belongs to God. Listen! The promise of God is destined to be fulfilled. But most of them do not know this. It is He Who gives life and it is He Who gives death and you shall be returned to Him alone. (53-56)

People! There has come to you from your Lord a counsel, a cure for the ailments of the chests and a guidance and mercy for those who believe. Say: It has come due to God's blessings and mercy. So, they should rejoice on it. It is better than what they are amassing. (57-58)

Tell them: Speak up! The sustenance which God sent down to you; then some of it you have pronounced to be unlawful and the other as lawful? Ask: Did God give you this directive or are you imputing falsehood to God? What is the thinking on the Day of Judgement of those who are imputing falsehood to God? God is very gracious to people but most people are not grateful. (59-60)

And in whatever situation you are and whatever part that you read out from the

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Book and whatever task you people do, We are with you when you are busy in it. And there is not the slightest of anything hidden from your Lord, neither in the earth nor in the heavens and neither smaller than a particle nor bigger except that it is written in a clear book. Listen: for the friends of God who accepted faith and feared God, there shall be no fear nor shall they be grieved. For them are glad tidings in the life of this world also and in that of the Hereafter too. And the words of God can never change. This alone is great success. What they say should not grieve you. All honour is for God. He listens and knows all. (61-65)

Listen intently! Those in the heavens and in the earth all belong to God and they, who call upon those other than God, do not follow the partners of God. In fact, they only follow conjecture and make wild guesses. He Who made the night dark for you so that you may rest in it and made the day radiant so that you may strive for your livelihood in it. Indeed, there are signs in this for those who listen. They say: "God has children." Exalted is He from such things. He is self-sufficient. Whatever is in the heavens and in the earth all belongs to Him. You do not have any proof for this. Do you say something about God of which you have no knowledge? Say: Those who impute falsehood to God shall not succeed. For them, there is benefit of a few days in this world. Then they shall have to return to Us alone. Then We shall sternly punish them because of their disbelief. (66-70)

Explanation

وَمَا كَانَ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنُ اَنْ يُّفْتَرٰى مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَلٰكِنْ تَصْدِيْقَ الَّذِيْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيْلَ الْكِتٰبِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ مِنْ رَّبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ اَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ افْتَرٰىهُ ؕ قُلْ فَاْتُوْا بِسُوْرَةٍ مِّثْلِهٖ وَادْعُوْا مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ بَلْ كَذَّبُوْا بِمَا لَمْ يُحِيْطُوْا بِعِلْمِهٖ وَلَمَّا يَاْتِهِمْ تَاْوِيْلُهٗ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ كَذَّبَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾[27]

In verse 15, the authenticity of the Qur'ān was substantiated through the character of the person to whom the Qur'ān was revealed. After that, the subsequent verses affirmed the claims made by the Qur'ān – especially those claims which annoyed its adversaries and as a result of which they began demanding a new book or to make a change in the Qur'ān. Now in these verses, the same topic is once again taken up. The prophecies referred to have already cited in the exegesis of Sūrahs Baqarah and Āl-i 'Imrān.

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27. This Qur'ān is not something that can be authored without God. In fact, it is a validation of the predictions that are present before it and details the Book. There is no doubt that it is from the Lord of the Universe. Do they say: "He has fabricated it?" Tell them: If you are truthful, bring forth a *sūrah* like it and call whoever you can except God. No, this is not the case. In fact, these people are denying what their knowledge could not grasp and whose reality is not evident to them as yet. Those before them had also denied similarly. Then observe the fate these unjust people met.

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In the expression "and details the Book," the Book referred to is the Torah. The prophecies of the Torah were in concise and vague form and needed explanation. The Qur'ān did this and also completed and explained the religion which was left to the last prophet. The word الْكِتٰب (the Book) has also been used in the Qur'ān for the books of the Torah. Even the Injīl is included in it. At times, the plural كتب (books) is used to refer to the parts and at times the singular الْكِتٰب is used to refer to the complete book. Before the Qur'ān, it was the Torah which occupied the status of الْكِتٰب . All other scriptures had the status of being its chapters and sections.

The real reason of denial of the Prophet's adversaries is pointed out in the words "in fact, these people are denying what their knowledge could not grasp and whose reality is not evident to them as yet." The punishment which the messenger is informing them of was not coming in their grasp because it had not manifested itself. They wanted to see its sample before believing in it and accepting the Qur'ān as a divine book.

The word تَاْوِيْل means the manifestation of a news.

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يُّؤْمِنُ بِهٖ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ لَّا يُؤْمِنُ بِهٖ ؕ وَرَبُّكَ اَعْلَمُ بِالْمُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿۴۰﴾ وَاِنْ كَذَّبُوْكَ فَقُلْ لِّيْ عَمَلِيْ وَلَكُمْ عَمَلُكُمْ ۚ
اَنْتُمْ بَرِيْٓـُٔوْنَ مِمَّآ اَعْمَلُ وَاَنَا بَرِيْٓءٌ مِّمَّا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿۴۱﴾ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَّسْتَمِعُوْنَ اِلَيْكَ ؕ اَفَاَنْتَ تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ وَلَوْ كَانُوْا لَا
يَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿۴۲﴾ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَّنْظُرُ اِلَيْكَ ؕ اَفَاَنْتَ تَهْدِى الْعُمْىَ وَلَوْ كَانُوْا لَا يُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿۴۳﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْـًٔا وَّ
لٰكِنَّ النَّاسَ اَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿۴۴﴾[28]

These verses sound an assurance to the Prophet (sws) and also warn the rejecters of the Qur'ān. The implication is that if there are people among them who are professing faith, it is evident that they also have sensible people among them. A requisite of this is that they be given time so that such people are given the opportunity to accept faith and the rest are left with no excuse. God is fully aware of them and will make them taste the consequences of their misdeeds.

A declaration of acquittal is mentioned in verse 41. Such a declaration by a God's messenger is a harbinger of torment. As long as a messenger is among his people, he is a means of immunity for them from such a torment. Once, he leaves them, they no longer have this immunity. The torment can now visit them anytime. For this reason, such a declaration is no ordinary a thing. It is the most delicate time in the life of a

28. And there are those among them also who believe in the Qur'ān and your Lord is fully aware of those who spread disorder. And if they reject you, say: For me are my deeds and for you yours. You have no responsibility of my deeds and I have no responsibility of yours. There are those among them also who intently listen to you. So, will you make the deaf listen if they understand nothing? And there are those among them also who turn their attention towards you. So, will you show the way to the blind even if they see nothing? God is not the slightest unjust to people; in fact, people are unjust to themselves.

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nation.

The verse "there are those among them also who intently listen to you; so, will you make the deaf listen if they understand nothing?" also assures the Prophet (sws) just like verse 41. He should rest assured that there are men of understanding and insight among them. As for those who have become deaf, dumb and blind because of their misdeeds, they will never listen. He should not expect them to do so. The established practice of God about providing guidance will not change. He gives guidance to only those who use their innate faculties.

The verse "and there are those among them also who turn their attention towards you; so, will you show the way to the blind even if they see nothing?" mentions exactly the same topic as the one in the previous one.

The next verse "God is not the slightest unjust to people; in fact, people are unjust to themselves" is a type of comment on what is said earlier. A question that may arise in the minds is that why is it that so many people become so blind and deaf that they deserve God's eternal punishment? The reason is not because God is unjust to them but that they are unjust to their own selves. God has created human beings with the best of abilities. If they use them, they will feel that the call of the prophets and messenger is the call of their own hearts. However, they become blind in pursuit of their desires, as a result of which every call of truth seems alien to them and instead of accepting it, they run away from it.

وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ كَاَنْ لَّمْ يَلْبَثُوْٓا اِلَّا سَاعَةً مِّنَ النَّهَارِ يَتَعَارَفُوْنَ بَيْنَهُمْ ؕ قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِلِقَآءِ اللّٰهِ وَمَا كَانُوْا مُهْتَدِيْنَ ﴿۴۵﴾ وَاِمَّا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِيْ نَعِدُهُمْ اَوْ نَتَوَفَّيَنَّكَ فَاِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ ثُمَّ اللّٰهُ شَهِيْدٌ عَلٰى مَا يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿۴۶﴾[29]

These verses answer the haste created by those who deny the hereafter and its torment. It is implied that today they regard the hereafter to be a far-fetched reality but when it arrives, they will think that they spent a very short while in this world. They will recognize one another there as if they have been meeting one another all the while. Everything will be fresh in their minds as if it happened in not too distant a future. In other words, when the real thing is one's feelings towards this world in the hereafter, then it is the misfortune of a person that while considering this world to have a long time span he becomes indifferent to the hereafter. Moreover, when he is warned of it, he starts demanding its arrival.

Regarding what is stated in verse 46, an established practice of God must be kept in mind: if a messenger's nation in its collective capacity decides to deny him and plans

29. And the day God will gather them they will feel that they stayed for only a short period of a day. They would recognize one another. Great was the loss incurred by those who denied the meeting with God and did not adopt the right path. Either We shall show you a part of what We are promising them or give death to you. Thus, they have to return to Us. Then God is a witness to what they are doing.

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to kill him, then it is destroyed once the messenger and his nation are sifted out. Furthermore, if there exist a substantial amount of believers in a nation, then instead of sending a decisive punishment to it, the punishment of the disbelievers among them is delayed to the hereafter. Thus, in the case of Prophet Muḥammad (sws) since a large part of his nation had professed faith, it did not face a decisive punishment the way, the ‘Ād, the Thamūd etc faced. His enemies were killed in battles with the believers and now they will be held accountable before God in the hereafter.

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُوْلٌ ۚ فَإِذَا جَآءَ رَسُوْلُهُمْ قُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾[30]

This verse warns the Quraysh in the light of the established practice pointed out at a number of instances in this exegesis: God has sent His messengers in every nation to conclusively deliver the truth to it. These messengers set up a court of justice in this world on behalf of God. Their fate is decided in this world. Those who profess faith in the messenger triumph and those who insist on disbelief are routed. In other words, the Quraysh too will now face this law. God’s scale of justice has been set up for them in this world and a messenger has come to them to deliver the truth conclusively to them. If they reject, they shall necessarily face the same punishment as faced by others before them who rejected their respective messenger.

The last part of the verse refers to the fact that in the implementation of this decision God’s justice will prevail fully. A messenger of God conclusively delivers the truth to his people and gives it the time needed to understand his message and reflect on it. Those who persist on their denial in spite of all these efforts have their fate sealed.

Here a difference between a prophet and his messenger – explained at several instances in this exegesis – should be kept in mind: this established practice only pertains to messengers of God and not to His prophets. It is not essential for it to materialize for them.

وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ مَتٰى هٰذَا الْوَعْدُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ قُلْ لَّآ أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِيْ ضَرًّا وَّلَا نَفْعًا إِلَّا مَا شَآءَ اللّٰهُ ۗ لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلٌ ۗ إِذَا جَآءَ أَجَلُهُمْ فَلَا يَسْتَأْخِرُوْنَ سَاعَةً وَّلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُوْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾[31]

The implication of this verse is that when these people are informed of the punishment, then instead of becoming alert and securing themselves of its danger, they make fun of it by asking for its arrival from the Prophet (sws) and his companions. The first part of verse 49 is an answer to this demand from the tongue of

30. And for every nation there is a messenger. Then, when their messenger arrives, their fate is justly decided and no injustice is done to them.

31. And they say: “When will this promise be fulfilled, if you are truthful?” Tell them: I do not have any authority regarding any benefit or harm for even my own self except what God wills. For each nation, there is a period fixed. When that time arrives, they are not advanced in time or deferred for a moment.

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the Prophet (sws). The implication is that this decision is in God's hands. When this punishment appears, none will be able to avert it.

The period mentioned in the last part of verse 49 is measured by God through moral standards. He gives respite to every nation; when its rebelliousness reaches the stage that is fixed for its destruction, it is decimated by God. Only God is aware of the extent of this time.

قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ اِنْ اَتٰىكُمْ عَذَابُهٗ بَيَاتًا اَوْ نَهَارًا مَّاذَا يَسْتَعْجِلُ مِنْهُ الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿۵۰﴾ اَثُمَّ اِذَا مَا وَقَعَ اٰمَنْتُمْ بِهٖ ؕ آٰلْـٰٔنَ وَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ بِهٖ تَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَ ﴿۵۱﴾ ثُمَّ قِيْلَ لِلَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا ذُوْقُوْا عَذَابَ الْخُلْدِ ۚ هَلْ تُجْزَوْنَ اِلَّا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿۵۲﴾[32]

Their question about its time of arrival was given through the tongue of the prophet earlier. Now simultaneously another question is posed to them in verse 50. A subtle reference in the use of the word "wrongdoers" here is that if those who are absolved of crimes ask such a question, it may be considered legitimate. However, those who are wrongdoers and who are going to be visited by this punishment in retribution of their crimes can only be termed as wretched and unfortunate because of this stubborn attitude they have adopted.

They are further told that if they will only believe when it arrives, it will be too late.

Here these people are called unjust because they themselves are responsible for their misdeeds: as mentioned in verse 47, God will never be unjust to them.

وَيَسْتَنْۢبِـُٔوْنَكَ اَحَقٌّ هُوَ ؕ قُلْ اِيْ وَرَبِّيْٓ اِنَّهٗ لَحَقٌّ ۚ وَمَآ اَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِيْنَ ﴿۵۳﴾ وَلَوْ اَنَّ لِكُلِّ نَفْسٍ ظَلَمَتْ مَا فِي الْاَرْضِ لَافْتَدَتْ بِهٖ ؕ وَاَسَرُّوا النَّدَامَةَ لَمَّا رَاَوُا الْعَذَابَ ۚ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۵۴﴾[33]

The question posed here is similar to the one posed in verse 48 earlier. The difference is that here the element of rejection and making fun that was downplayed there has become fully evident. Those who ask questions have different temperaments. Some are polite and some are blunt. The question cited here is from the tongue of such blunt elements.

The word اِیْ is a particle of response and means نعم (yes) and only occurs before an oath. While keep in mind the mentality of the questioners, instead of a simple answer an emphatic one is given signifying the certainty of the Day of Judgement. The words

32. Tell them: Speak up! If God's torment visits you any time in the day or night, what is the basis on which the wrongdoers want to hurry it on? Then will you only believe when it appears? Now you have believed! You were calling to hasten it. Then, it will be said to these unjust: "Taste eternal torment now; this is the recompense of your earning."

33. They ask you: "Is this really a truth?" Say: Yes, by my Lord! this is certain and you will not be able to escape. And if every soul that has been unjust is given all that is in the earth, it will want to give it in ransom and they will regret when they will see the torment. And they shall be fairly judged and no injustice shall they suffer.

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"and you will not be able to escape" are meant to lambast their arrogance.

Consider next the words "and if every soul that has been unjust is given all that is in the earth, it will want to give it in ransom and they will regret when they will see the torment; and they shall be fairly judged and no injustice shall they suffer." They express their helplessness. The part "they will regret when they will see the torment" expresses precisely what is said in verse 31 of Sūrah al-An'ām in the words: حَتّٰٓى اِذَا جَآءَتْهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً قَالُوْا يٰحَسْرَتَنَا عَلٰى مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِيْهَا (until when that hour suddenly arrives, they will say: "pitiful is our negligence in this regard.") Since the source of regret is a person's inner-self, the word اَسَرُّوا is used in the verse under discussion. This is similar to the usage found in the idiom ابطن العداوة. The purpose is to show that today they are making fun but tomorrow they will regret their foolishness.

The last part of the verse depicts the perfect justice of God about them. Not the slightest injustice will they suffer. It also indicates that the hopes they would have pinned on their alleged deities and intercessors will prove baseless.

اَلَآ اِنَّ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ اَلَآ اِنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ وَّلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۵۵﴾ هُوَ يُحْيٖ وَيُمِيْتُ وَاِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿۵۶﴾[34]

This further substantiates through monotheism what is discussed earlier. No one has a share in the heavens and the earth. God alone is its master. All His promises are certain to materialize. If anyone thinks that he will face the deities he believed in, it is his naivety. He should correct his view. How can those who have no share in creating and giving death become masters in the hereafter. The sentence "but most of them do not know this" is not merely a piece of information. Concealed in it is sorrow and regret too. In other words, the fact is that all of God's promises and warnings are certain to materialize and at that time, none will be able to save himself from God if he is guilty but alas most of these people have shut their ears to this great reality.

يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَآءَتْكُمْ مَّوْعِظَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَآءٌ لِّمَا فِي الصُّدُوْرِ ۙ وَهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿۵۷﴾ قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللّٰهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهٖ فَبِذٰلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوْا ؕ هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُوْنَ ﴿۵۸﴾[35]

In order to refresh the current discourse of verses in the minds of the readers, it may be noted that it began in verse 37 with the refutation of the disbelievers that this Book is a fabrication. After that things which were causing confusion in the mind of the addressees were discussed and proven. They were the ones because of which they

34. Listen! The promise of God is destined to be fulfilled. But most of them do not know this. It is He Who gives life and it is He Who gives death and you shall be returned to Him alone.

35. People! There has come to you from your Lord a counsel, a cure for the ailments of the chests and a guidance and mercy for those who believe. Say: It has come due to God's blessings and mercy. So, they should rejoice on it. It is better than what they are amassing.

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were denying the Qur'ān and rejecting the Prophet (sws). Now these people are addressed directly and the nature of the treasure that the Qur'ān is explained. It is God's favour because of which they have received it. However, unfortunate people are not duly valuing it. Here four features of the Qur'ān are stated here. Firstly, it is a counsel from their Lord. In other words, it informs people of the dangers they need to protect themselves from and those who are blindly advancing to these dangers are scolded. Secondly, it is a cure for the ailment found in the hearts of people. These ailments divest people of all human traits and as punishment they lose the ability to accept guidance and as a result become worse than animals. The Qur'ān is a remedy for these ailments. Here, it may be kept in mind that the Qur'ān regards the heart to be the fountainhead of all wisdom and insight and the center of real life as well as determination and action. According to it, only those people are alive whose hearts are alive and vice versa. Thirdly and fourthly, it is guidance and mercy respectively. These two attributes encompass the beginning and the end: this Book is guidance in this world for people and those who accept it, it is a guarantee of mercy in the hereafter.

In the expression قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللّٰهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهٖ a verb is suppressed. Ie. قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللّٰهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهٖ جاءَ (this Qur'ān has brought the grace and mercy of God). In other words, those who want to be happy should embrace this grace and mercy for it is far better than the trivial things they are amassing in this world and have become so blind because of them that they are not able to see this eternal treasure.

قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ مَّآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ مِّنْ رِّزْقٍ فَجَعَلْتُمْ مِّنْهُ حَرَامًا وَّ حَلٰلًا ؕ قُلْ آٰللّٰهُ اَذِنَ لَكُمْ اَمْ عَلَى اللّٰهِ تَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿۵۹﴾ وَ مَا ظَنُّ الَّذِيْنَ يَفْتَرُوْنَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ الْكَذِبَ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَذُوْ فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَ لٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿۶۰﴾[36]

In the previous verse, the Qur'ān was mentioned by addressing these people directly, as referred to earlier. Now once again monotheism and the hereafter are mentioned. They had already been brought up in discussion from beginning to prove the authenticity of the Qur'ān. The relationship between polytheism and the authority to regard things as prescribed or proscribed is evident. In the first instance, the latter is an intervention in the rights of God and as such amounts to polytheism per se. Secondly, the idolaters had prescribed and proscribed things under their polytheistic beliefs, as has been discussed in Sūrah al-An'ām. However, they claimed that it was God's directive. Obviously, ascribing this self-invented *sharī'ah* to God was imputing

36. Tell them: Speak up! The sustenance which God sent down to you; then some of it you have pronounced to be unlawful and the other as lawful? Ask: Did God give you this directive or are you imputing falsehood to God? What is the thinking on the Day of Judgement of those who are imputing falsehood to God? God is very gracious to people but most people are not grateful.

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falsehood to Him, which is a heinous sin.

The words "What is the thinking on the Day of Judgement of those who are imputing falsehood to God?" express the extreme grave nature of imputing falsehood to God. The question is not even answered. This signifies the extreme anger of the speaker. The implication is that do these people regard this great sin to be something ordinary? When the day of judgement arrives they will come to know the punishment they will have to face for this audacity.

The words "God is very gracious to people but most people are not grateful" imply that such was the heinous nature of this sin that God could have decimated them forthwith; however, such is His graciousness that He gives respite to people in spite of these great wrongdoings. He also does not deprive them of sustenance and livelihood so that if they want to reform their ways and repent and make amends, they are provided with this opportunity. Yet most people are ungrateful and their foolishness and pranks increase with this respite and forgiveness.

وَمَا تَكُوْنُ فِيْ شَاْنٍ وَّمَا تَتْلُوْا مِنْهُ مِنْ قُرْاٰنٍ وَّلَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ اِلَّا كُنَّا عَلَيْكُمْ شُهُوْدًا اِذْ تُفِيْضُوْنَ فِيْهِ ؕ وَمَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْ رَّبِّكَ مِنْ مِّثْقَالِ ذَرَّةٍ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَآءِ وَلَاۤ اَصْغَرَ مِنْ ذٰلِكَ وَلَاۤ اَكْبَرَ اِلَّا فِيْ كِتٰبٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿۶۱﴾ اَلَاۤ اِنَّ اَوْلِيَآءَ اللّٰهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿۶۲﴾ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَكَانُوْا يَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿۶۳﴾ لَهُمُ الْبُشْرٰى فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْاٰخِرَةِ ؕ لَا تَبْدِيْلَ لِكَلِمٰتِ اللّٰهِ ؕ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿۶۴﴾ وَلَا يَحْزُنْكَ قَوْلُهُمْ ؕ اِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلّٰهِ جَمِيْعًا ؕ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿۶۵﴾[37]

The Prophet (sws) and his companions are addressed here and given assurance and glad tidings. They should not be worried at the mischief worked by his adversaries.

In the expression مَا تَتْلُوْا مِنْهُ مِنْ قُرْاٰنٍ the antecedent of the genetive pronoun is the Book of God referred to earlier in verses 57-58 and Qur'ān here refers to a part of it. Examples of this usage are found in the Qur'ān. The plural address found in لَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ وَّ is to the companions of the Prophet (sws) so that it becomes evident that this assurance and these glad tidings are not specific to him. His companions are also included. They had put their lives in danger for the cause of God's religion.

Consider the expression: اِذْ تُفِيْضُوْنَ فِيْهِ. When the verb افاض is used with the preposition

37. And in whatever situation you are and whatever part that you read out from the Book and whatever task you people do, We are with you when you are busy in it. And there is not the slightest of anything hidden from your Lord, neither in the earth nor in the heavens and neither smaller than a particle nor bigger except that it is written in a clear book. Listen: for the friends of God who accepted faith and feared God, there shall be no fear nor shall they be grieved. For them are glad tidings in the life of this world also and in that of the Hereafter too. And the words of God can never change. This alone is great success. What they say should not grieve you. All honour is for God. He listens and knows all.

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فی it means to be engrossed in something. Here these words not only depict this intense involvement of the companions for the cause of religion but also enhance the eloquence in the assurance sounded. So the precise meaning would be that when the Prophet (sws) has fully and exclusively devoted himself to the cause of religion, God also remains busy in protecting and watching over him.

The style of the words: "Listen: for the friends of God …" without saying implies that the group just mentioned is the one of God's friends and for them are glad tidings of the life of Hereafter in which there are neither any regrets of the past nor any fears of the future.

The purpose of the attributes mentioned in "who accepted faith and feared God" is to show that this status of friendship with God and its consequence are for those who have them.

Regarding the words "for them are glad tidings in the life of this world also and in that of the Hereafter too" the established practice of God regarding His messengers may be kept in mind that has been mentioned at several places in the Qur'ān: they and their companions are destined to prevail over their adversaries in this world. However, for prophets of God who were not messengers, this is not the case.

"And the words of God can never change" refers to the promises of God. The implication is that God's promises are certain to be fulfilled. Real and great success is the one which the believers are being promised here.

The expression "What they say should not grieve you" refer to the sarcastic and acerbic comments of the disbelievers. One such example can be seen in verse 12 of Sūrah Hūd thus: فَلَعَلَّكَ تَارِكٌۢ بَعْضَ مَا يُوْحٰٓى اِلَيْكَ وَ ضَآىِٕقٌۢ بِهٖ صَدْرُكَ اَنْ يَّقُوْلُوْا لَوْلَآ اُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ كَنْزٌ اَوْ جَآءَ مَعَهٗ مَلَكٌ ؕ اِنَّمَآ اَنْتَ نَذِيْرٌ ؕ وَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَیْءٍ وَّكِيْلٌ ﴿۱۲﴾.[38]

Considering the deplorable situation of the Muslims during the time of revelation of the verses under discussion, the prophecy of dominance mentioned in the previous verse could have given the disbelievers an opportunity to make fun. They could have and must have said that these poor paupers are dreaming of dominance when they can not even fulfil their basic needs. Keeping in view this background the Prophet (sws) was assured: the glad tidings given to him in the form of a prophecy are certain to materialize; God is the master of honour and respect. It is God Who gives respect and honour. If He has decided to bestowed this honour on the Prophet (sws) and his companions, none can stop Him. The attributes mentioned in the end are meant to instruct the Prophet (sws) and his companions regarding patience and trust. God knows and hears everything. Every question their enemies have in mind will be answered at its appropriate time. As for the Prophet (sws) and his companions, they should be patient.

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38. Perhaps, you will be leaving out a part of what is being revealed to you and it is distressing you that these people will say: "Why was not a treasure revealed to him or why was not an angel sent with him?" So, you are only a warner and everything is entrusted to God.

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اَلَآ اِنَّ لِلّٰهِ مَنْ فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ مَنْ فِی الْاَرْضِ ؕ وَ مَا یَتَّبِعُ الَّذِیْنَ یَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ شُرَكَآءَ ؕ اِنْ یَّتَّبِعُوْنَ اِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَ اِنْ هُمْ اِلَّا یَخْرُصُوْنَ ﴿۶۶﴾ هُوَ الَّذِیْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الَّیْلَ لِتَسْكُنُوْا فِیْهِ وَ النَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا ؕ اِنَّ فِیْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰیٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ یَّسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿۶۷﴾ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللّٰهُ وَلَدًا سُبْحٰنَهٗ ؕ هُوَ الْغَنِیُّ ؕ لَهٗ مَا فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ مَا فِی الْاَرْضِ ؕ اِنْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِّنْ سُلْطٰنٍ بِهٰذَا ؕ اَتَقُوْلُوْنَ عَلَی اللّٰهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۶۸﴾ قُلْ اِنَّ الَّذِیْنَ یَفْتَرُوْنَ عَلَی اللّٰهِ الْكَذِبَ لَا یُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿۶۹﴾ مَتَاعٌ فِی الدُّنْیَا ثُمَّ اِلَیْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ ثُمَّ نُذِیْقُهُمُ الْعَذَابَ الشَّدِیْدَ بِمَا كَانُوْا یَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿۷۰﴾[39]

The previous verses, as indicated, addressed the Prophet (sws). The topic of monotheism that was under discussion is now once again taken up.

The word ظن here refers to something is neither based on correct knowledge nor on intellect and intuition. It is something totally speculative.

In verse 67, parallel portions have been suppressed keeping in view linguistic principles of Arabic. If they are revealed, the words would be: جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الَّيْلَ (مُظْلِمًا) لِتَسْكُنُوْا فِيْهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا (لِتعْمَلُوْا فِيْهِ)

The signs referred to in verse 67 are not referred to. However, they are explained at other instances in the Qur'ān. I will refer to some of them here:

First of all, we must reflect on the harmony found between the night and the day even though they are opposite to one another. Together both are serving the needs of human beings. The night provides them with peaceful slumber and the day opens the way to various activities. Same is the case with all the opposite elements of this universe: they harmoniously and faithfully serve a purpose higher to them and not the slightest deviate from it. Obviously, this cannot be possible if a sovereign and wise intention is not controlling the affairs of this universe and not running it according to his wisdom by synchronizing its various elements. This is a proof of the monotheism mentioned in the previous verse.

The second thing that is evident is that this universe has not come into being as a result of an accident nor is it the playfield of an entertainer. In fact, there is great power, amazing wisdom and a very deep purpose in every nook and corner of it. This

39. Listen intently! Those in the heavens and in the earth all belong to God and they, who call upon those other than God, do not follow the partners of God. In fact, they only follow conjecture and make wild guesses. He Who made the night dark for you so that you may rest in it and made the day radiant so that you may strive for your livelihood in it. Indeed, there are signs in this for those who listen. They say: "God has children." Exalted is He from such things. He is self-sufficient. Whatever is in the heavens and in the earth all belongs to Him. You do not have any proof for this. Do you say something about God of which you have no knowledge? Say: Those who impute falsehood to God shall not succeed. For them, there is benefit of a few days in this world. Then they shall have to return to Us alone. Then We shall sternly punish them because of their disbelief.

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entails that this world should not continue without purpose or abruptly end; it is essential that it culminate on a great objective and this objective cannot be achieved unless the Hereafter is acknowledged.

The third thing is the system of providence which is found in every part of this universe. Providence entails accountability. We owe a natural obligation to the Being Who has set up a whole system of sustenance for us and it is essential that one day this obligation be called to account. Those who recognized this obligation must be rewarded and those who disregarded it should suffer punishment. Viewed thus, this is a proof of reward and punishment.

Consider the verse: قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللّٰهُ وَلَدًا سُبْحٰنَهٗ. The word is used for singular, plural, masculine and feminine entities. Those who regard it to means a son have faltered. This meaning is against linguistic usage as well as the beliefs of the Arabs. Here the beliefs of the Idolaters of Arabia are under discussion and they never regarded anyone to be God's son; they regarded angels to be His daughters.

The word سُبْحٰنَهٗ means that it is against God's attributes to assign children to Him because children would be a part of His being and His peers and someone similar to Him. This amounts to polytheism in His being and negates His peerlessness. God is self-sufficient. A person needs children to preserve his species and helps him in his work. When he grows old, they become his support. God is beyond all these needs and whatever is in the heavens and the earth belong to Him. So, why would He need children?

Section VI: Verses (71-93)

In this section, the anecdotes of Noah (sws) and Moses (sws) are mentioned in detail while the anecdotes of the messengers who came in between them are mentioned briefly. The purpose of these historical tales is to highlight the same things that have been highlighted earlier through arguments drawn from human nature and intellect. These anecdotes provide assurance to the Prophet (sws) and his companions and warn their adversaries. If there is any difference, it is that of name, place and time-period. The real story holds so much similarity that if this difference is discounted, no difference remains.

Readers may now proceed to study the verses.

Text and Translation

وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَاَ نُوْحٍ ۘ اِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهٖ يٰقَوْمِ اِنْ كَانَ كَبُرَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَّقَامِيْ وَتَذْكِيْرِيْ بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ فَعَلَى اللّٰهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ
فَاَجْمِعُوْٓا اَمْرَكُمْ وَشُرَكَآءَكُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَكُنْ اَمْرُكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ غُمَّةً ثُمَّ اقْضُوْٓا اِلَيَّ وَلَا تُنْظِرُوْنِ ﴿٧١﴾ فَاِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَمَا

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سَاَلْتُكُمْ مِّنْ اَجْرٍ ؕ اِنْ اَجْرِيَ اِلَّا عَلَى اللّٰهِ ۙ وَ اُمِرْتُ اَنْ اَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿۷۲﴾ فَكَذَّبُوْهُ فَنَجَّيْنٰهُ وَمَنْ مَّعَهٗ
فِي الْفُلْكِ وَ جَعَلْنٰهُمْ خَلٰٓئِفَ وَ اَغْرَقْنَا الَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا ۚ فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُنْذَرِيْنَ ﴿۷۳﴾ ثُمَّ
بَعَثْنَا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ رُسُلًا اِلٰى قَوْمِهِمْ فَجَآءُوْهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ فَمَا كَانُوْا لِيُؤْمِنُوْا بِمَا كَذَّبُوْا بِهٖ مِنْ قَبْلُ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ
نَطْبَعُ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِ الْمُعْتَدِيْنَ ﴿۷۴﴾ ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ مُّوْسٰى وَ هٰرُوْنَ اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ وَ مَلَا۟ئِهٖ بِاٰيٰتِنَا
فَاسْتَكْبَرُوْا وَ كَانُوْا قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿۷۵﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا قَالُوْٓا اِنَّ هٰذَا لَسِحْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿۷۶﴾ قَالَ
مُوْسٰٓى اَتَقُوْلُوْنَ لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَآءَكُمْ ؕ اَسِحْرٌ هٰذَا ؕ وَ لَا يُفْلِحُ السّٰحِرُوْنَ ﴿۷۷﴾ قَالُوْٓا اَجِئْتَنَا لِتَلْفِتَنَا عَمَّا وَجَدْنَا
عَلَيْهِ اٰبَآءَنَا وَ تَكُوْنَ لَكُمَا الْكِبْرِيَآءُ فِي الْاَرْضِ ؕ وَ مَا نَحْنُ لَكُمَا بِمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿۷۸﴾ وَ قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ائْتُوْنِيْ بِكُلِّ سٰحِرٍ
عَلِيْمٍ ﴿۷۹﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَ السَّحَرَةُ قَالَ لَهُمْ مُّوْسٰٓى اَلْقُوْا مَآ اَنْتُمْ مُّلْقُوْنَ ﴿۸۰﴾ فَلَمَّآ اَلْقَوْا قَالَ مُوْسٰى مَا جِئْتُمْ بِهِ ۙ
السِّحْرُ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَيُبْطِلُهٗ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُصْلِحُ عَمَلَ الْمُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿۸۱﴾ وَ يُحِقُّ اللّٰهُ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمٰتِهٖ وَ لَوْ كَرِهَ
الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿۸۲﴾ فَمَآ اٰمَنَ لِمُوْسٰٓى اِلَّا ذُرِّيَّةٌ مِّنْ قَوْمِهٖ عَلٰى خَوْفٍ مِّنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَ مَلَا۟ئِهِمْ اَنْ يَّفْتِنَهُمْ ؕ وَ اِنَّ
فِرْعَوْنَ لَعَالٍ فِي الْاَرْضِ ۚ وَ اِنَّهٗ لَمِنَ الْمُسْرِفِيْنَ ﴿۸۳﴾ وَ قَالَ مُوْسٰى يٰقَوْمِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ اٰمَنْتُمْ بِاللّٰهِ فَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلُوْٓا
اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿۸۴﴾ فَقَالُوْا عَلَى اللّٰهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا ۚ رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِّلْقَوْمِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿۸۵﴾ ۙ وَ نَجِّنَا بِرَحْمَتِكَ
مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿۸۶﴾ وَ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلٰى مُوْسٰى وَ اَخِيْهِ اَنْ تَبَوَّاٰ لِقَوْمِكُمَا بِمِصْرَ بُيُوْتًا وَّ اجْعَلُوْا بُيُوْتَكُمْ قِبْلَةً وَّ
اَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ ؕ وَ بَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿۸۷﴾ وَ قَالَ مُوْسٰى رَبَّنَآ اِنَّكَ اٰتَيْتَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَ مَلَاَهٗ زِيْنَةً وَّ اَمْوَالًا فِي الْحَيٰوةِ
الدُّنْيَا ۙ رَبَّنَا لِيُضِلُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِكَ ۚ رَبَّنَا اطْمِسْ عَلٰٓى اَمْوَالِهِمْ وَ اشْدُدْ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُوْا حَتّٰى يَرَوُا
الْعَذَابَ الْاَلِيْمَ ﴿۸۸﴾ قَالَ قَدْ اُجِيْبَتْ دَّعْوَتُكُمَا فَاسْتَقِيْمَا وَ لَا تَتَّبِعٰٓنِّ سَبِيْلَ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۸۹﴾ وَ جٰوَزْنَا
بِبَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ الْبَحْرَ فَاَتْبَعَهُمْ فِرْعَوْنُ وَ جُنُوْدُهٗ بَغْيًا وَّ عَدْوًا ؕ حَتّٰٓى اِذَآ اَدْرَكَهُ الْغَرَقُ ۙ قَالَ اٰمَنْتُ اَنَّهٗ لَآ اِلٰهَ
اِلَّا الَّذِيْٓ اٰمَنَتْ بِهٖ بَنُوْٓا اِسْرَآءِيْلَ وَ اَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿۹۰﴾ آٰلْـٰٔنَ وَ قَدْ عَصَيْتَ قَبْلُ وَ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿۹۱﴾
فَالْيَوْمَ نُنَجِّيْكَ بِبَدَنِكَ لِتَكُوْنَ لِمَنْ خَلْفَكَ اٰيَةً ؕ وَ اِنَّ كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ عَنْ اٰيٰتِنَا لَغٰفِلُوْنَ ﴿۹۲﴾ وَ لَقَدْ بَوَّاْنَا
بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ مُبَوَّاَ صِدْقٍ وَّ رَزَقْنٰهُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبٰتِ ۚ فَمَا اخْتَلَفُوْا حَتّٰى جَآءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِيْ بَيْنَهُمْ
يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ فِيْمَا كَانُوْا فِيْهِ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿۹۳﴾

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And read out to them the anecdote of Noah when he told his nation: "O People of My Nation! If my stay among you and reminding you about God's revelations has become a burden on you, then I put my trust in God only. So, you all should come to a decision and also ask your partners with God to join you, then there should be no hesitancy in your decision. And do whatever you want with me and do not give me any respite. Thus if you show indifference, I have not asked you for any reward. My reward is with God and I have been directed to be among the obedient." Then they rejected him; so, We delivered him and those also who were with him on the ship. And made them successors and drowned those who denied Our revelations. So, observe the fate they met who had been fore-warned. (71-73)

Then We sent messengers to their nations. So, they came to them with clear signs. But they did not profess faith in what they had denied earlier. In this manner, We put a seal on the hearts of those who cross the limits. (74)

Then, after this, We sent Moses and Aaron to the Pharaoh and his courtiers with Our signs. So, they showed arrogance and they were wrongdoers. Thus when the truth came to them from Us, they said: "This is manifest magic." Moses said: "Do you regard the truth to be magic when it has come to you. Is this magic? And magicians never succeed." They replied: "Have you come to us to turn us away from the way on which we found our forefathers and that both you become the leaders of this country? And we are not ones who will listen to what you say." And the Pharaoh ordered: "Bring before me all expert magicians." Thus, when the magicians came, Moses said to them: "Present whatever you want to present." Then when they presented, Moses said: "Whatever you have brought is magic." Indeed, God shall destroy it. God does not allow the efforts of those who spread disorder to bear fruit, and God through His words makes the truth prevail, however much the wrongdoers may dislike it. Yet because of fear of the Pharaoh and of the elders of the nation no one believed in Moses except for a few youth lest he may put them through some trial. Indeed, the Pharaoh was a big tyrant in that country and was from those who cross limits. And Moses said: "People of My Nation! If you have believed in God, trust Him only if you have consigned yourselves to Him." They replied: "We have trusted God alone – Our Lord! Do not make us suffer at the hands of the unjust and deliver us from these disbelieving people by your grace." (75-86)

And We sent revelation to Moses and his brother: "Mark some houses in Egypt for your nation, and make your houses your *qiblah* and be diligent in the prayer and give glad tidings to the believers." And Moses prayed: "Our Lord! You have bestowed the Pharaoh and his chiefs with majesty and resources in the life of the world. Our Lord! So that as a consequence they lead astray people from your path. Our Lord! Destroy their wealth and seal their hearts so that they are not able to profess faith until they see the painful punishment." God said: "Your prayer is accepted. Persevere both of you and do not tread the path of those who do not have knowledge." (87-89)

And We made the Israelites cross the sea; so, the Pharaoh and his armies pursued

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them because of arrogance and tyranny. Until when he was about to drown, he cried out: "I profess faith that there is no God except Him on whom the Israelites have professed faith, and I become his obedient." Is it now? Though before this, you kept showing defiance and were among those who spread disorder. Thus, today We shall preserve your body so that you can become a sign for those who come after you. And indeed many only remain heedless to Our signs. And We provided the Israelites with a dwelling of honour and gave them good sustenance. And they only differed when knowledge had come to them. On the Day of Judgement, your Lord will decide among them the matters in which they have been differing. (90-93)

Explanation

وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَاَ نُوْحٍ ۘ اِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهٖ يٰقَوْمِ اِنْ كَانَ كَبُرَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَّقَامِيْ وَتَذْكِيْرِيْ بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ فَعَلَى اللّٰهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ فَاَجْمِعُوْٓا اَمْرَكُمْ وَشُرَكَآءَكُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَكُنْ اَمْرُكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ غُمَّةً ثُمَّ اقْضُوْٓا اِلَيَّ وَلَا تُنْظِرُوْنِ ﴿٧١﴾[40]

Amongst the nations of the past, the oldest whose tales of destruction were well-known to the Arabs was the nation of Noah (sws). For this reason, when the history of past nations is stated in chronological sequence in the Qur'ān, it is this nation which is mentioned the foremost. They have been mentioned in verses 60-64 of Sūrah al-A'rāf. There I have indicated the area they inhabited as well as the approximate time period they lived through.

The word نَبَاَ means some important event. Thus it is evident from its use that the purpose is to refer to some important time and decisive moment of their history. Merely narrating a story as historians do is not the purpose.

"Stay" here refers to the lengthy period of time spent by Noah (sws) among his nation. It is evident from verse 14 of Sūrah al-'Ankabūt that he preached for a very long time until his adversaries got sick and tired of his preaching, as is evident from verse 32 of Sūrah Hūd. It was at this juncture that Noah (sws) said what is mentioned in the verse under discussion. This is in fact a prelude to the challenge mentioned ahead.

The word اَمْر means "opinion" and "decision." The word غُمَّة means "something that covers." However, when used idiomatically as in هو فی غمة, it means that someone was hesitant or wonder-struck. The preposition اِلَى after اقْضُوْٓا shows that the verb encompasses the meaning of taking action. Noah (sws) told them to go ahead and fulfil their scheme without giving him any respite for he trusted God as his protector.

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40. And read out to them the anecdote of Noah when he told his nation: "O People of My Nation! If my stay among you and reminding you about God's revelations has become a burden on you, then I put my trust in God only. So, you all should come to a decision and also ask your partners with God to join you, then there should be no hesitancy in your decision. And do whatever you want with me and do not give me any respite."

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فَاِنۡ تَوَلَّيۡتُمۡ فَمَا سَاَلۡتُكُمۡ مِّنۡ اَجۡرٍ ؕ اِنۡ اَجۡرِىَ اِلَّا عَلَى اللّٰهِ ۙ وَاُمِرۡتُ اَنۡ اَكُوۡنَ مِنَ الۡمُسۡلِمِيۡنَ ﴿۷۲﴾[41]

The verse implies that if after deliberation they have reached the conclusion that they should persist with their aversion and indifference, then Noah (sws) is least bothered. He is not charging them for his preaching so that he may fear any loss. He is not responsible to forcibly make them into believers.

فَكَذَّبُوۡهُ فَنَجَّيۡنٰهُ وَمَنۡ مَّعَهٗ فِى الۡفُلۡكِ وَجَعَلۡنٰهُمۡ خَلٰٓئِفَ وَاَغۡرَقۡنَا الَّذِيۡنَ كَذَّبُوۡا بِاٰيٰتِنَا ۚ فَانۡظُرۡ كَيۡفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الۡمُنۡذَرِيۡنَ ﴿۷۳﴾[42]

Here it is worth noting that the drowning of the rejecters is not mentioned first. On the contrary, what is stated first is Noah (sws) and his companions deliverance. This is because it is God's established practice that when the torment visits the rejecters, the believers are first secured by God.

The last sentence of the verse "so, observe the fate they met who had been fore-warned" directs the attention of the Prophet (sws) to the purpose for which this anecdote was narrated. In other words, just as the nation of Noah (sws) was destroyed after conclusive communication of the truth, a similar fate awaits the Quraysh if they do not pay heed to the Prophet's calls.

ثُمَّ بَعَثۡنَا مِنۡۢ بَعۡدِهٖ رُسُلًا اِلٰى قَوۡمِهِمۡ فَجَآءُوۡهُمۡ بِالۡبَيِّنٰتِ فَمَا كَانُوۡا لِيُؤۡمِنُوۡا بِمَا كَذَّبُوۡا بِهٖ مِنۡ قَبۡلُ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ نَطۡبَعُ عَلٰى قُلُوۡبِ الۡمُعۡتَدِيۡنَ ﴿۷۴﴾[43]

This verse concisely refers to the messengers that came after Noah (sws). Here they are not mentioned and only a passing reference is given. After this, the succeeding verses take up the anecdote of Moses (sws). This concise and brief mention has been complemented with details in the succeeding *sūrah*: Hūd, which is the counterpart of

41. "Thus if you show indifference, I have not asked you for any reward. My reward is with God and I have been directed to be among the obedient." Then they rejected him; so, We delivered him and those also who were with him on the ship. And made them successors and drowned those who denied Our revelations. So, observe the fate they met who had been fore-warned.

42. Then We sent messengers to their nations. So, they came to them with clear signs. But they did not profess faith in what they had denied earlier. In this manner, We put a seal on the hearts of those who cross the limits.

43. Then We sent messengers to their nations. So, they came to them with clear signs. But they did not profess faith in what they had denied earlier. In this manner, We put a seal on the hearts of those who cross the limits.

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the current *sūrah*. Mentioned in the next *sūrah* are the anecdotes of Ṣāliḥ (sws), Lot (sws) and Shu'ayb (sws). Similarly, some aspects of the tales of nations of Noah (sws) and Moses (sws) are also divulged which were not stated in the current *sūrah*. This style of detailing out things after first mentioning them briefly is very commonly used in the Qur'ān.

The words "but they did not profess faith in what they had denied earlier; in this manner, We put a seal on the hearts of those who cross the limits" refer to God's established practice regarding the urge to accept faith that is mentioned repeatedly in the Qur'ān and which has been explained by me at several instances in this exegesis: those who deny what is obvious from human nature and intellect receive no benefit from the warnings of the messenger. Such people are conclusively delivered the truth from him and as a result their hearts are sealed if they do not accept the truth. The word إعتداء means "to exceed limits." Those who break the bounds set by God, the sense of abiding by these bounds becomes dead and once this happens nothing good can be expected from them. No amount of shaking and jolting can awake such dead people.

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ مُّوْسٰى وَهٰرُوْنَ اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَا۟ئِهٖ بِاٰيٰتِنَا فَاسْتَكْبَرُوْا وَكَانُوْا قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾[44]

The word اٰيٰتِ means the revelations of God which Moses (sws) recited out to the Pharaoh and his courtiers and also to the signs which he showed them.

The word "wrongdoers" refers to their contaminated heart, mind and intellect, as alluded to in the previous verse: since their heart and intellect have become blind, they are not able to benefit from anything. Here it needs to be kept in mind that Moses (sws) and Aaron (sws) had gone to the Pharaoh and his chiefs as messengers of God. Thus they must have conclusively delivered the truth to them. Without this, their mission was not complete. Thus the view of those who believe that Moses (sws), like a nationalist leader, had only demanded the freedom of the Israelites from the Pharaoh and did not invite him to faith and religion is not correct.

فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا قَالُوْٓا اِنَّ هٰذَا لَسِحْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٧٦﴾ قَالَ مُوْسٰٓى اَتَقُوْلُوْنَ لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَآءَكُمْ ؕ اَسِحْرٌ هٰذَا ؕ وَلَا يُفْلِحُ السّٰحِرُوْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾[45]

The word حق refers to a clear and evident truth. Here, it refers to the claim before the Pharaoh and his courtiers in the presence of manifest miracles that Moses (sws) and Aaron (sws) are God's messengers. They denied this claim and regarded his miracles

44. Then, after this, We sent Moses and Aaron to the Pharaoh and his courtiers with Our signs. So, they showed arrogance and they were wrongdoers.

45. Thus when the truth came to them from Us, they said: "This is manifest magic." Moses said: "Do you regard the truth to be magic when it has come to you. Is this magic? And magicians never succeed."

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to be magic and that this power of magic was more pronounced in their own magicians.

The object of the verb تَقُوْلُوْنَ is suppressed in deference to eloquence. In the word لِلْحَقِّ, ل connotes فی. The meaning of اَتَقُوْلُوْنَ لِلْحَقِّ would be: about a clear truth you say that it is magic. The reason that the word "magic" is suppressed here is that the speaker dislikes it to so much in relation to the truth that expressing it is very despicable to him. He does not even want to contaminate his tongue with it.

The eloquence found in the words "when it has come to you" is noteworthy. When the truth is not in a person's observation, he can be afforded an excuse if he raises some ideological debate about it. However, when it is right before a person's eyes, then disputing it is like denying the mid-day sun. I have explained in the exegesis of Sūrah al-A'rāf that the difference between magic and miracle is not evident through logic. It becomes evident through their nature of manifestation, through its effects on the mind and the heart and through the character of their presenters. Magicians never succeed in a permanent manner. Their success is temporary especially when they have to confront the truth. In this case, they cannot stand before it even for a moment. The dazzling sun of miracles totally outshines the lamps of magic. This sentence is also a challenge from Moses (sws) to the Pharaoh and his courtiers. When they bring their magicians before the miracles presented by him, they will come to know the difference between them.

قَالُوْٓا اَجِئْتَنَا لِتَلْفِتَنَا عَمَّا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ اٰبَآءَنَا وَتَكُوْنَ لَكُمَا الْكِبْرِيَآءُ فِى الْاَرْضِ ؕ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكُمَا بِمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿۷۸﴾[46]

This sentence uttered by the Pharaoh and his courtiers is very venomous. It is tantamount to blaming Moses (sws) of rebellion. I have shed light on it in the exegesis of Sūrah al-A'rāf with references from the Torah: the aristocracy ruling Egypt in those times feared the ever increasing number of Israelites there lest they become so much that they are able to dislodge the Copts and install themselves as its rulers. Thus one purpose of the cruel scheme of killing the male offspring of the Israelites was to check their growth. Since this fear was present in the minds, when the preaching efforts of Moses (sws) started to increase, a rumour was spread against them. It was said that they wanted to seize power of the country so that the sense of honour of the Copts is instigated and they become prepared to face this challenge.

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ائْتُوْنِىْ بِكُلِّ سٰحِرٍ عَلِيْمٍ ﴿۷۹﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَ السَّحَرَةُ قَالَ لَهُمْ مُّوْسٰٓى اَلْقُوْا مَآ اَنْتُمْ مُّلْقُوْنَ ﴿۸۰﴾ فَلَمَّآ اَلْقَوْا قَالَ مُوْسٰى مَا جِئْتُمْ بِهِ ۙ السِّحْرُ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَيُبْطِلُهٗ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُصْلِحُ عَمَلَ الْمُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿۸۱﴾ وَيُحِقُّ اللّٰهُ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمٰتِهٖ وَلَوْ

46. They replied: "Have you come to us to turn us away from the way on which we found our forefathers and that both you become the leaders of this country? And we are not ones who will listen to what you say."

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كَرِهَ الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾[47]

It was not hidden from the Pharaoh and his courtiers that neither was Moses (sws) a magician nor what he was presenting magic. However, since acknowledging this would have been a death blow to their leadership, they adopted an escape route of calling in all expert magicians of their country and having them compete against Moses (sws). Though this was blatant foolishness but such is the desire to not accept the truth that a person commits the greatest of foolishness.

The fact that Moses (sws) asked the magicians to go first shows his extreme confidence. He fully trusted God's promise to help him so that he would be able to outdo the magicians. This was like his first victory in the match because the defeat of the magicians which followed was in the area of their own choice.

In verse 76 earlier, the magicians had called the miracle shown by Moses (sws) as magic. Now, here in verse 81, Moses (sws) responds by saying that what they are presenting was magic and not what he has presented. What is stated by the words "indeed, God shall destroy it" is mentioned elsewhere thus in verse 81 of Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl: وَقُلْ جَآءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ ۭ اِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوْقًا.[48]

In verse 81, the word إصلاح means to make something reach its consequence or bear fruit. It is used in this meaning in verses 2-5 of Sūrah Muḥammad as well. In other words, the efforts of the wrongdoers never bear fruit against the reformers who preach the truth. After passing through trial and test, the righteous always triumph. However much these wrongdoers may try to stop the truth from prevailing, they cannot and the righteous are able to make it prevail.[49]

فَمَآ اٰمَنَ لِمُوْسٰٓى اِلَّا ذُرِّيَّةٌ مِّنْ قَوْمِهٖ عَلٰي خَوْفٍ مِّنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَا۟ئِهِمْ اَنْ يَّفْتِنَهُمْ ۭ وَاِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ لَعَالٍ فِي الْاَرْضِ ۚ وَاِنَّهٗ لَمِنَ الْمُسْرِفِيْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾[50]

The word ذُرِّيَّةٌ is not just expressing scarcity, as has been generally understood; it also shows that initially only a few people from among the young professed faith in

47. And the Pharaoh ordered: "Bring before me all expert magicians." Thus, when the magicians came, Moses said to them: "Present whatever you want to present." Then when they presented, Moses said: "Whatever you have brought is magic." Indeed, God shall destroy it. God does not allow the efforts of those who spread disorder to bear fruit, and God through His words makes the truth prevail, however much the wrongdoers may dislike it.

48. And declare: The truth has arrived and evil has perished and evil was bound to perish.

49. It may be noted here that the conflict between the truth and falsehood mentioned here is one between a messenger of God and his adversaries. A messenger is destined to triumph in this world over their enemies.

50. Yet because of fear of the Pharaoh and of the elders of the nation no one believed in Moses except for a few youth lest he may put them through some trial. Indeed, the Pharaoh was a big tyrant in that country and was from those who cross limits.

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Moses (sws). In the case of messengers, God's established practice has been that in the early stages only the young generally supported them. The early history of Islam also shows no different a situation and if the history of other prophets can be known, it too would be no different. The obvious psychological reason for this is that the comprehensive nature of religious preaching with which messengers of God begin their work needs immense courage and great spirit on the part of those who accept it in the first phase. People who are over-awed by the traditions and customs of their times and who want to remain congruous with their circumstances cannot take such a huge stride. Such people take time in accepting a new ideology. Young people on the other hand have lesser affiliations of this type. Hence when the call of true faith appeals to them, they accept it regardless of its worldly consequences. They neither care for the chidings of their elders nor entertain the distaste of their ruling class. A special aspect regarding the circumstances in which Moses (sws) was and which should be kept in consideration is that the ruling aristocracy of his time was racially different from his own nation and the Pharaoh who was ruling at that time was very haughty and tyrannical in nature. In such circumstances, obviously only those individuals could take the initiative in siding with Moses (sws) who could not subdue their vigour and vivacity.

The Qur'ān has used the words اٰمَنَ لَهٗ for the faith professed by the young individuals of Moses' (sws) nation. Those who have knowledge of Arabic know that there is a great difference between اٰمَنَ لَهٗ and اٰمَنَ بِهٖ . The former means a person's claim or information given is accepted as true. There is no condition of obeying or consigning one's self to it. However, the latter includes this condition. In the case of a prophet or a messenger, it this latter which is required. Thus among the Israelites some youth reached the former stage but not to the latter. Since Moses (sws) was aware of this, he taught them the essence of faith, which is mentioned in the next verse.

The antecedent of the pronoun in مَلَا۟ئِهِمْ is ذُرِّيَّةٌ (progeny). In other words, these young individuals feared the Pharaoh that he may target them because of siding with Moses (sws) and also felt threatened by the chiefs and leaders of the nation that if they got to know that they were with Moses (sws), they would make their lives miserable. It may be kept in mind that until this phase the behaviour of the elders of the Israelites too was that in spite of having sympathy for Moses (sws), they did not want to undertake any risk for their children.

وَقَالَ مُوْسٰى يٰقَوْمِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ اٰمَنْتُمْ بِاللّٰهِ فَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلُوْٓا اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾ فَقَالُوْا عَلَى اللّٰهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا ۚ رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا
فِتْنَةً لِّلْقَوْمِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَنَجِّنَا بِرَحْمَتِكَ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾ [51]

51. And Moses said: "People of My Nation! If you have believed in God, trust Him only if you have consigned yourselves to Him." They replied: "We have trusted God alone – Our

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Here in verse 84 Moses (sws) has tried to make his people understand the essence of faith in God: if they have professed faith, they must not have fear or regard of anyone; they should strive towards Him by disregarding everyone and have full trust in Him. He Who has led them to His path will help them when they encounter hardships. In other words, the essential consequence of faith is trust in God and the essential consequence of this trust is that a person fully consigns himself to God, and this is what precisely Islam is.

It is evident from verse 85 that the companions of Moses (sws) accepted this teaching and supplicated in the words mentioned because they fully understood that trust does not mean to isolate one's self in seclusion but to endanger one's life for the cause of God if the need arises. The word فِتْنَة here means "target." The implication of their supplication was that God should not give their enemies so much respite that they let loose on them so much oppression that they are forced to give up their religion. It is evident from this that in order to fulfil the requisites of trust in God just as it is essential that a person should have a strong determination, it is also equally necessary that at every step he invokes God and seeks His help. This would protect them from the trials of this path and give the urge to tackle them.

Since it was evident from the initial phase that Moses (sws) wanted to liberate the Israelites from the slavery of the Pharaoh and his people, he supplicated before God to achieve this noble purpose. This supplication was to ask for His help to succeed in migration.

وَاَوْحَيْنَآ اِلٰى مُوْسٰى وَاَخِيْهِ اَنْ تَبَوَّاٰ لِقَوْمِكُمَا بِمِصْرَ بُيُوْتًا وَّاجْعَلُوْا بُيُوْتَكُمْ قِبْلَةً وَّاَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ ؕ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿۸۷﴾ 52

This verse states the strategy through which patience and trust – on which they were instructed earlier – can be acquired. The directive given here is exactly the same as the one that was given to the Prophet (sws) in the life of hardship he and his companions encountered in Makkah. The relationship of patience and trust with the prayer has been discussed in detail at several instances in this exegesis.

In the life of slavery in Egypt, the Israelites were deprived of features of collective religious duties. It seems that collective prayers and supplications did not exist among them in any form. Now that Moses (sws) had initiated their revival, it had to begin with the directive which is the basic one regarding collective religious obligations: thus they were asked to show diligence in praying in congregation and for this some houses should be regarded as mosques in which people could gather for the prayer.

Lord! Do not make us suffer at the hands of the unjust and deliver us from these disbelieving people by your grace."

52. And We sent revelation to Moses and his brother: "Mark some houses in Egypt for your nation, and make your houses your *qiblah* and be diligent in the prayer and give glad tidings to the believers."

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This way was adopted because it was not possible for the Israelites to gather at one place from all parts of Egypt.

When many mosques came into being as a result, it was essential that one of them should be regarded as the *qiblah*. While reading this verse, my mind goes to the houses which Moses (sws) and Aaron (sws) must have reserved for the prayer for themselves and their followers and associates and the Israelites who lived nearby. Since it was these houses which held the central position in preaching and providing guidance, these houses were given the status of temporary *qiblah* in the transitional period. Later when the Israelites migrated, the status of the qiblah was given to the ark until the Bayt al-Muqadddis was built. This ark has been mentioned in verse 248 of Sūrah al-Baqarah.

The last part of the verse gives glad tidings to the believers who persevere in the cause of God and are diligent in their prayers. God will make such people persevere and grant them success both in this world and the in the next. These glad tidings have been mentioned earlier in verse 2 thus: وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اَنَّ لَهُمْ قَدَمَ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ.[53] Specifically for the Israelites how these glad tidings manifested themselves is mentioned in verse 93 ahead.

وَقَالَ مُوْسٰى رَبَّنَآ اِنَّكَ اٰتَيْتَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَاَهٗ زِيْنَةً وَّاَمْوَالًا فِى الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۙ رَبَّنَا لِيُضِلُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِكَ ۚ رَبَّنَا اطْمِسْ عَلٰٓى اَمْوَالِهِمْ وَاشْدُدْ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُوْا حَتّٰى يَرَوُا الْعَذَابَ الْاَلِيْمَ ﴿٨٨﴾[54]

This supplication was uttered by Moses (sws) when after all his efforts he had lost hopes in the Pharaoh and his people professing faith. It was at this stage when Noah (sws) had prayed for the adversaries of this nation in the following words:

قَالَ نُوْحٌ رَّبِّ اِنَّهُمْ عَصَوْنِىْ وَاتَّبَعُوْا مَنْ لَّمْ يَزِدْهُ مَالُهٗ وَوَلَدُهٗٓ اِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿٢١﴾ ... وَقَدْ اَضَلُّوْا كَثِيْرًا ۚ وَلَا تَزِدِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ اِلَّا ضَلٰلًا ﴿٢٤﴾ ... وَقَالَ نُوْحٌ رَّبِّ لَا تَذَرْ عَلَى الْاَرْضِ مِنَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ دَيَّارًا ﴿٢٦﴾ اِنَّكَ اِنْ تَذَرْهُمْ يُضِلُّوْا عِبَادَكَ وَلَا يَلِدُوْٓا اِلَّا فَاجِرًا كَفَّارًا ﴿٢٧﴾

Noah said: "O Lord! They have disobeyed me and followed those whose wealth and children only added to their ruin and they contrived great schemes … And

53. And give glad tidings to the believers that for them is a position of high rank with their Lord.

54. And Moses prayed: "Our Lord! You have bestowed the Pharaoh and his chiefs with majesty and resources in the life of the world. Our Lord! So that as a consequence they lead astray people from your path. Our Lord! Destroy their wealth and seal their hearts so that they are not able to profess faith until they see the painful punishment."

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they misled many. And only increase these wrongdoers in further error." … And Noah said: "O Lord! Leave not one of these disbelievers in the land. If You spare them, they will mislead Your servants and will beget none but sinners and disbelievers." (71:22, 24, 27)

It has been explained at many instances in this exegesis that a messenger is the last means of conclusive communication of the truth. If after such communication his nation does not accept faith, it means that it does not have the slightest ability to acknowledge the truth. Now if it remains on the face of earth, it will become a means of leading others astray and no hope of any good is found in it. For this reason, God's established practice is that the disbelievers of the nations who are conclusively conveyed the truth through a messenger are given a certain period of respite and then are necessarily destroyed. In this world, the life given to a nation is for the purpose of polishing its abilities. Nourishing evil per se is against the temperament of this universe. Thus Moses (sws) made this supplication when it became evident to him that now nothing but the scourge of God can open the eyes of these rebellious people.

Consider the expression: رَبَّنَا لِيُضِلُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِكَ. Here the letter ل expresses the consequence and fate. In other words, Moses (sws) supplicated to God that the wealth and resources He has blessed them with should make them rebellious instead of being grateful and that they should not be given any further respite. Here it needs to be kept in mind that those who deny God's messengers shut their eyes to all signs and insist that unless they are shown the promised doom they will not accept faith. The Pharaoh and his nation too had the same demand. Keeping in view this mentaliy, Moses (sws) supplicated before God to fulfil their stubborn demand after he had totally lost hope in they professing faith.

قَالَ قَدْ اُجِيْبَتْ دَّعْوَتُكُمَا فَاسْتَقِيْمَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعٰٓنِّ سَبِيْلَ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٨٩﴾[55]

A supplication that is uttered at the right time is soon accepted. Since the responsibility of preaching and warning that was imposed on Moses (sws) and Aaron (sws) had been fulfilled in the best possible way, their prayer was accepted. They are further directed to courageously witness the fate God has in store for these rebellious people. Seeing their horrific end, no sympathy should arise in them nor hould they say any words of recommendation in their favour. Moreover, their infected minds must not infect Moses (sws) and his companions in any way. Precisely the same directive was given to Noah (sws) once a decision had been taken by God to decisively punish his nation. It is mentioned thus in Sūrah Hūd:

55. God said: "Your prayer is accepted. Persevere both of you and do not tread the path of those who do not have knowledge."

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وَاصْنَعِ الْفُلْكَ بِاَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحْيِنَا وَلَا تُخَاطِبْنِيْ فِي الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا ۚ اِنَّهُمْ مُّغْرَقُوْنَ (١١: ٣٧)

And make a ship under our surveillance. And do not say anything to Me about these unjust people. They shall necessarily be drowned. (11:37)

Precisely in this context, the Prophet (sws) and his companions were given the same directive:

فَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَآ اُمِرْتَ وَمَنْ تَابَ مَعَكَ وَلَا تَطْغَوْا ۭ اِنَّهٗ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ بَصِيْرٌ وَلَا تَرْكَنُوْٓا اِلَى الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ ۙ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مِنْ اَوْلِيَاۗءَ ثُمَّ لَا تُنْصَرُوْنَ (١١: ١١٢-١١٣)

So, remain steadfast as you have been directed and they too who have repented together with you and do not be deviant. Indeed, He is observing whatever you are doing. And do not lean towards the unjust people so that the fire of Hell seizes you as well. And none except God is your supporter. Then you will not be helped. (11:112-113)

The purpose of this warning is to prepare those for whom one is responsible. They should beware lest one of their own elopes to the group for whom destruction is now destined and to which the scourge of God is about to visit. On such an occasion, a messenger is apparently addressed; however, the direction of address is towards others. Thus in the above cited verses of Sūrah Hūd, this also been elucidated: first the address was in the singular and then it was in the plural.

وَجٰوَزْنَا بِبَنِيْٓ اِسْرَاۗءِيْلَ الْبَحْرَ فَاَتْبَعَهُمْ فِرْعَوْنُ وَجُنُوْدُهٗ بَغْيًا وَّعَدْوًا ۭ حَتّٰٓى اِذَآ اَدْرَكَهُ الْغَرَقُ ۙ قَالَ اٰمَنْتُ اَنَّهٗ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا الَّذِيْٓ اٰمَنَتْ بِهٖ بَنُوْٓا اِسْرَاۗءِيْلَ وَاَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿٩٠﴾ آٰلْـٰٔنَ وَقَدْ عَصَيْتَ قَبْلُ وَكُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿٩١﴾ فَالْيَوْمَ نُنَجِّيْكَ بِبَدَنِكَ لِتَكُوْنَ لِمَنْ خَلْفَكَ اٰيَةً ۭ وَاِنَّ كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ عَنْ اٰيٰتِنَا لَغٰفِلُوْنَ ﴿٩٢﴾[56]

The words “and We made the Israelites cross the sea” signfiy God’s special attention and affection in taking the Israelites across the sea. How did this happen? It is a matter of God’s will that the very path which the sea provided to the Israelites to cross the sea was the one passing through which the Pharaoh and his army drowned.

56. And We made the Israelites cross the sea; so, the Pharaoh and his armies pursued them because of arrogance and tyranny. Until when he was about to drown, he cried out: “I profess faith that there is no God except Him on whom the Israelites have professed faith, and I become his obedient.” Is it now? Though before this, you kept showing defiance and were among those who spread disorder. Thus, today We shall preserve your body so that you can become a sign for those who come after you. And indeed many only remain heedless to Our signs.

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The Qur'ān has said here that this pursuit by the Pharaoh was done out of arrogance and tyranny. One special aspect of this arrogance and tyranny was that after a long conflict, the Pharaoh himself had given the Israelites the permission to go. After that, he recanted and followed them. Thus this tyrannical act exceeded all other ones. The acknowledgement of the Pharaoh mentioned at the time of his drowning portrays his helplessness. When tyrants and despots are seized by God, they are overcome with such type of complete helplessness. It is at this time that they acknowledge their defeat and accept the reality they were ever prepared to accept. However, such an acknowledgement never bears fruit. It is not necessary that the words: "is it now? though before this, you kept showing defiance and were among those who spread disorder" were actually spoken. They could merely signify their state as well.

In this great sign of revenge taken by God another great sign appeared. The sea did not accept the corpse of the Pharaoh. In fact, in order to make an example out of it, it threw it out. This corpse was spotted by later generations also and people saw with their eyes the fate of the person who claimed to be God. In Egypt, it was a convention to mummify and thereby preserve corpses and there is one mummified corpse of a Pharaoh preserved in a museum in Egypt. The experts of archeology may differ about the corpse whether it is of the same Pharaoh or some other one yet this fourteen century old statement of the Qur'ān about the corpse is much more trustworthy than their conjectures. In this way, God made his dead body an exemplary sign for even the Pharaohs of today but this needs eyes for observation and there is nothing more rare in this world than eyes which have insight. The last part of the verse points to this aspect.

وَلَقَدْ بَوَّاْنَا بَنِيٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ مُبَوَّاَ صِدْقٍ وَّرَزَقْنٰهُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبٰتِ ۚ فَمَا اخْتَلَفُوْا حَتّٰى جَآءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ ۭ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِيْ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ فِيْمَا كَانُوْا فِيْهِ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿٩٣﴾[57]

The word تبویه means "to provide a place of dwelling" and its annexure towards صِدْق adds the meaning of stability and strength to it. What is implied is that in this way God decimated the enemy of the Israelites and gave them political authority and stability in the land selected by Him. This land was Syria and Jordan, as has been specified in the exegesis of Sūrah al-Baqarah. The words "and gave them good sustenance" point to the lushness of the land. Its details are found in the Torah and the Qur'ān too has referred to them at various instances.

The words "and they only differed when knowledge had come to them" point to their ingratitude. In spite of receiving great favours from God, the Jews showed this

57. And We provided the Israelites with a dwelling of honour and gave them good sustenance. And they only differed when knowledge had come to them. On the Day of Judgement, your Lord will decide among them the matters in which they have been differing.

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attitude about the religion and book of God. They created various types of differences in them and thereby lost the guidance they had received. As a result, they were left to wander about in confusion, from which God had made special arrangements to come out. These words show that it was not in the darkness of night that they could not find the way; on the contrary, it was in broad day light that they faltered. Hence all the onus of this lies on them.

The words "on the Day of Judgement, your Lord will decide among them the matters in which they have been differing" sound a threat. The fraudulent ways they had adopted at that time in the matter of religion and the facts of the Book of God they had hidden will one day be exposed. A time has been prescribed for this. On that day, every thing will come to light and every person will be punished in accordance with the extent of his crimes.

Section VI: Verses (94-109)

This section forms the concluding part of the *sūrah*. First the rejected are warned and rebuked by addressing the Prophet (sws): none of their ways should cause any hesitancy in him; he should not be sad if these wretched people are denying what has been revealed to him. There still are people who were recipients of the Book that was revealed prior to this one. If they Prophet (sws) asks them, they will substantiate it. After that the Prophet (sws) is assured that he should not think that if as per their desire, his adversaries are shown any sign, they will become believers. Those who are facing the consequences of God's law will not believe whatever sign is shown to them. There is only one example in history of a nation – the nation of Jonah (sws) – which came back from the jaws of destruction and their faith was beneficial to them. God has great liking for people accepting faith but He wants that they profess faith with freedom of choice and by seeing God's signs in the world within and that around them. He does not like compulsion in this matter nor does He encourage the demand of people to see miracles. Those who need signs should reflect on the signs of the heavens and the earth and those who want to see the punishment that visited earlier nations should wait because the Prophet (sws) too is waiting.

In the end, the belief of monotheism is declared through the tongue of the Prophet (sws). This declaration is like the last declaration of acquittal from the religion of disbelief and polytheism so that the polytheists lose complete hope in any compromise and do what they want to.

Readers may proceed to study these verses.

Explanation

فَاِنۡ كُنۡتَ فِىۡ شَكٍّ مِّمَّاۤ اَنۡزَلۡنَاۤ اِلَيۡكَ فَسۡـَٔـلِ الَّذِيۡنَ يَقۡرَءُوۡنَ الۡكِتٰبَ مِنۡ قَبۡلِكَ‌ ۚ لَقَدۡ جَآءَكَ الۡحَـقُّ مِنۡ رَّبِّكَ فَلَا

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تَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِيْنَ ﴿٩٤﴾ وَلَا تَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ فَتَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿٩٥﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ
حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِمْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٩٦﴾ وَلَوْ جَآءَتْهُمْ كُلُّ اٰيَةٍ حَتّٰى يَرَوُا الْعَذَابَ الْاَلِيْمَ ﴿٩٧﴾ فَلَوْلَا كَانَتْ قَرْيَةٌ
اٰمَنَتْ فَنَفَعَهَآ اِيْمَانُهَآ اِلَّا قَوْمَ يُوْنُسَ ؕ لَمَّآ اٰمَنُوْا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِى الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَتَّعْنٰهُمْ
اِلٰى حِيْنٍ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَلَوْ شَآءَ رَبُّكَ لَاٰمَنَ مَنْ فِى الْاَرْضِ كُلُّهُمْ جَمِيْعًا ؕ اَفَاَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتّٰى يَكُوْنُوْا مُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٩٩﴾
وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ اَنْ تُؤْمِنَ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَيَجْعَلُ الرِّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ قُلِ انْظُرُوْا مَاذَا فِى
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ وَمَا تُغْنِى الْاٰيٰتُ وَالنُّذُرُ عَنْ قَوْمٍ لَّا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿١٠١﴾ فَهَلْ يَنْتَظِرُوْنَ اِلَّا مِثْلَ اَيَّامِ الَّذِيْنَ
خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ؕ قُلْ فَانْتَظِرُوْٓا اِنِّىْ مَعَكُمْ مِّنَ الْمُنْتَظِرِيْنَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ ثُمَّ نُنَجِّىْ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا كَذٰلِكَ ۚ حَقًّا
عَلَيْنَا نُنْجِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ قُلْ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِىْ شَكٍّ مِّنْ دِيْنِىْ فَلَآ اَعْبُدُ الَّذِيْنَ تَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ
اللّٰهِ وَلٰكِنْ اَعْبُدُ اللّٰهَ الَّذِىْ يَتَوَفّٰىكُمْ ۖ وَاُمِرْتُ اَنْ اَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ وَاَنْ اَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّيْنِ
حَنِيْفًا ۚ وَلَا تَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ وَلَا تَدْعُ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَلَا يَضُرُّكَ ۚ فَاِنْ فَعَلْتَ فَاِنَّكَ
اِذًا مِّنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَاِنْ يَّمْسَسْكَ اللّٰهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهٗٓ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ وَاِنْ يُّرِدْكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَلَا رَآدَّ لِفَضْلِهٖ ؕ يُصِيْبُ
بِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ ؕ وَهُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿١٠٧﴾ قُلْ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَآءَكُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّكُمْ ۚ فَمَنِ
اهْتَدٰى فَاِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِىْ لِنَفْسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَاِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا ۚ وَمَآ اَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيْلٍ ﴿١٠٨﴾ وَاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوْحٰٓى
اِلَيْكَ وَاصْبِرْ حَتّٰى يَحْكُمَ اللّٰهُ ۚ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحٰكِمِيْنَ ﴿١٠٩﴾

Thus if you have any doubt about that which We have revealed to you, ask these people who are reading the Book before you. Indeed, the truth has come to you from your Lord; so, do not be among those who doubt and do not be among those who have denied God's revelations lest you too end up among losers. Indeed, even if all the signs come before those for whom your Lord's word has come true, they will not be among those who profess belief until they see the painful scourge. So, why did this not happen that some city professed faith and its faith could have been beneficial to it except the nation of Jonah? When they professed faith, We delivered them from the humiliating punishment of this world and gave them the opportunity to live for a period of time. (94-98)

And had your Lord willed, all the people of the earth would have professed faith. So, will you force people to become believers? And without God's permission, it is not possible for anyone to profess faith. And He casts the filth on those who do not

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use their intellect. (99-100)

Tell them: Observe what is in the heavens and the earth. And signs and warnings do not in any manner benefit those who do not want to profess faith. They are they waiting for a day similar to the ones those before them encountered? Say: Wait; I am also among those who wait with you. Then We have been delivering Our messengers and the believers. In a similar way, it is Our responsibility to deliver the believers. (101-103)

Say: People! If you are in doubt about my religion, then listen that I do not worship those whom you worship besides God; I, in fact, worship the God Who gives you death and I have been directed to be among the believers and to devotedly turn to obedience and to be not be among the polytheists. And also to not call upon those besides God who can neither benefit you nor harm you. If you do this, you shall indeed be among the unjust. And if God seizes you in a hardship, there is no one besides Him Who can deliver you from it. And if He intends something good for you, then no one can withhold that favour of His. He blesses whomsoever He intends from His people with it and He is Forgiving and very Merciful. (104-107)

Tell them: People! The truth has come to you from your Lord. So, he who accepts guidance will do it for himself and he who goes astray will alone bear its consequences and I am not responsible for your faith. And follow what is revealed to you and be steadfast until God passes His judgement and He is the best of judges. (108-109)

Explanation

فَاِنۡ كُنۡتَ فِىۡ شَكٍّ مِّمَّاۤ اَنۡزَلۡنَاۤ اِلَيۡكَ فَسۡـَٔـلِ الَّذِيۡنَ يَقۡرَءُوۡنَ الۡكِتٰبَ مِنۡ قَبۡلِكَ‌ ۚ لَقَدۡ جَآءَكَ الۡحَـقُّ مِنۡ رَّبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُوۡنَنَّ مِنَ الۡمُمۡتَرِيۡنَ ﴿۹۴﴾ وَلَا تَكُوۡنَنَّ مِنَ الَّذِيۡنَ كَذَّبُوۡا بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ فَتَكُوۡنَ مِنَ الۡخٰسِرِيۡنَ ﴿۹۵﴾[58]

At times, the apparent address is to the Prophet (sws) but the anger found in it is actually directed towards the rejecters. They are not considered worthy of being addressed because of their stubbornness. If a truth is as evident as the midday sun and people unite to oppose it, there is a chance that they succeed in raising a doubt in the mind of a sincere and righteous person. In order to protect the Prophet (sws) from such reluctance, the verse advises him in the words stated. If these people are not duly valuing the Qur'ān, the Prophet (sws) should not be concerned about them; if those reading the Book before it are asked, they will corroborate it. The verb يَقۡرَءُوۡنَ (are reading) is used in its complete meaning. It refers to those People of the Book which are attested by the Qur'ān at various instances. The verse encourages the righteous that the time has come that they should introduce this truth they know to people.

58. Thus if you have any doubt about that which We have revealed to you, ask these people who are reading the Book before you. Indeed, the truth has come to you from your Lord; so, do not be among those who doubt and do not be among those who have denied God's revelations lest you too end up among losers.

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Here the manner in which the Prophet (sws) has been assured is the same as in Sūrah Hūd thus:

اَفَمَنۡ كَانَ عَلٰى بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنۡ رَّبِّهٖ وَيَتۡلُوۡهُ شَاهِدٌ مِّنۡهُ وَمِنۡ قَبۡلِهٖ كِتٰبُ مُوۡسٰٓى اِمَامًا وَّ رَحۡمَةً ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ يُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ بِهٖ ؕ وَ مَنۡ يَّكۡفُرۡ بِهٖ مِنَ الۡاَحۡزَابِ فَالنَّارُ مَوۡعِدُهٗ ۚ فَلَا تَكُ فِىۡ مِرۡيَةٍ مِّنۡهُ ۫ اِنَّهُ الۡحَـقُّ مِنۡ رَّبِّكَ وَ لٰكِنَّ اَكۡثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ (١١: ١٧)

Can a person who is on a clear proof from his Lord, then another witness also comes to him after it from his Lord and before this the Book of Moses is also present as a guide and mercy reject this Qur'ān and those who are deprived of insight be equal? Only such people shall profess faith in it and those from among the groups who reject it, for them the fire is the promised abode. Therefore, do not be in any doubt about it because it is the truth from your Lord but most people do not believe in it. (11:17)

اِنَّ الَّذِيۡنَ حَقَّتۡ عَلَيۡهِمۡ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ لَا يُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ ﴿٩٦﴾ وَلَوۡ جَآءَتۡهُمۡ كُلُّ اٰيَةٍ حَتّٰى يَرَوُا الۡعَذَابَ الۡاَلِيۡمَ ﴿٩٧﴾[59]

This verse points to God's established practice already referred to in verse 33.[60] In other words, sealed are the hearts of those who remain blind and deaf in spite of the truth being evident to them. After this, they never have the urge to profess faith.

The implication of verse 97 is that faith which is professed after observing punishment does not carry weight in the sight of God.

فَلَوۡلَا كَانَتۡ قَرۡيَةٌ اٰمَنَتۡ فَنَفَعَهَاۤ اِيۡمَانُهَاۤ اِلَّا قَوۡمَ يُوۡنُسَ ؕ لَمَّاۤ اٰمَنُوۡا كَشَفۡنَا عَنۡهُمۡ عَذَابَ الۡخِزۡىِ فِى الۡحَيٰوةِ الدُّنۡيَا وَ مَتَّعۡنٰهُمۡ اِلٰى حِيۡنٍ ﴿٩٨﴾[61]

This verse sounds assurance to the Prophet (sws) in the light of historical evidence. It says that the only example of a nation which paid heed before God's punishment arrived was that of Jonah (sws). The details of this are not mentioned here. They are mentioned elsewhere.

Besides this assurance, also found in this verse is exhortation and warning for the Quraysh. The time of their respite is about to expire. If they do not pay heed, they will meet the same fate as many other nations of the world. They still have a chance and

59. Indeed, even if all the signs come before those for whom your Lord's word has come true, they will not be among those who profess belief until they see the painful scourge.

60. In this way, the word of your Lord has become true for the defiant that they will not accept faith.

61. So, why did this not happen that some city professed faith and its faith could have been beneficial to it except the nation of Jonah? When they professed faith, We delivered them from the humiliating punishment of this world and gave them the opportunity to live for a period of time.

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can adopt the attitude of Jonah's nation.

It needs to be kept in mind that no decisive punishment visited the Prophet's nation like the one that visited the nations of 'Ād, Thamūd and some others. Most of his people who had the ability, in fact, gradually entered the folds of Islam. Only the miscreants did not enter it. They were killed by the swords of the believers in different battles.

وَلَوْ شَآءَ رَبُّكَ لَاٰمَنَ مَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ كُلُّهُمْ جَمِيْعًا ؕ اَفَاَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتّٰى يَكُوْنُوْا مُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٩٩﴾ وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ اَنْ تُؤْمِنَ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَيَجْعَلُ الرِّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿١٠٠﴾[62]

The first of these verses also sounds assurance to the Prophet (sws). He should not be worried if his nation is not accepting faith. God really likes people to profess faith but on the condition they do so in the light of their intellect and conscience. He does not like people to be forced into it. He could have made everyone a believer if He wanted. The responsibility of the Prophet (sws) is to only deliver the message to them and he has fulfilled it too. If now they do not accept faith, it is not his responsibility. It is now left to his people. They will be held accountable before God for this. It is not his responsibility to make them forcibly tread the path of faith.

The second of these verses point to the God's established practice regarding accepting or rejecting faith: whoever profess faith, do so with the urge and grace of God and this urge is only acquired by those who use their God-given intellect. God casts filth on the insight of those who do not use their intellect. This makes them totally blind and they continue to wander after their base desires.

قُلِ انْظُرُوْا مَاذَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ وَمَا تُغْنِي الْاٰيٰتُ وَالنُّذُرُ عَنْ قَوْمٍ لَّا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿١٠١﴾ فَهَلْ يَنْتَظِرُوْنَ اِلَّا مِثْلَ اَيَّامِ الَّذِيْنَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ؕ قُلْ فَانْتَظِرُوْٓا اِنِّيْ مَعَكُمْ مِّنَ الْمُنْتَظِرِيْنَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ ثُمَّ نُنَجِّيْ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا كَذٰلِكَ ۚ حَقًّا عَلَيْنَا نُنْجِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٠٣﴾[63]

The first of these verses answers the disbelievers regarding their demand to see miracles. The heavens and the earth are replete with signs and miracles. They are enough to open their eyes. After that, it is said that only those people benefit from

62. And had your Lord willed, all the people of the earth would have professed faith. So, will you force people to become believers? And without God's permission, it is not possible for anyone to profess faith. And He casts the filth on those who do not use their intellect.

63. Tell them: Observe what is in the heavens and the earth. And signs and warnings do not in any manner benefit those who do not want to profess faith. They are they waiting for a day similar to the ones those before them encountered? Say: Wait; I am also among those who wait with you. Then We have been delivering Our messengers and the believers. In a similar way, it is Our responsibility to deliver the believers.

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signs and warnings who have the intention to benefit from them. No sign can be of avail to those who do not want to profess faith. The verb يُؤْمِنُوْنَ expresses intention and "warnings" here refer specially refer to signs which are sent by God to strike fear in the hearts of people.

The implication of the second verse is that if they await the punishment meted out to some of the previous nations, then they should continue to wait because it is not the authority of the Prophet (sws) to bring such a punishment. Only God has this authority. However, the Prophet (sws) is observing that the circumstances that necessitate it are gradually springing up. Hence, while they wait, he too is waiting.

The third of these verses depicts the consequence of this punishment: none should regard it to be child's play. When the Almighty sends such a decisive punishment, only His messengers and those who profess faith in them are protected from it. All the rest are routed by it. The words "in a similar way, it is Our responsibility to deliver the believers" sound a warning to the Quraysh: as per God's established practice, they are now about to be seized. Similarly, it is His responsibility to secure those who have professed faith.

It has been explained at other instances in this exegesis that whenever the rejecters of God's messengers are decisively punished, these messengers and the believers are necessarily protected. It may be kept in mind that this principle only relates to God's messengers. General trials which inflict people to remind them encompass both believers and disbelievers. However, the former benefit from them and the latter are left with no excuse to deny the truth.

قُلْ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِيْ شَكٍّ مِّنْ دِيْنِيْ فَلَآ اَعْبُدُ الَّذِيْنَ تَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَ لٰكِنْ اَعْبُدُ اللّٰهَ الَّذِيْ
يَتَوَفّٰىكُمْ ۖ وَاُمِرْتُ اَنْ اَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿۱۰۴﴾ وَاَنْ اَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّيْنِ حَنِيْفًا ۚ وَلَا تَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿۱۰۵﴾ وَلَا
تَدْعُ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَلَا يَضُرُّكَ ۚ فَاِنْ فَعَلْتَ فَاِنَّكَ اِذًا مِّنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿۱۰۶﴾ وَاِنْ يَّمْسَسْكَ اللّٰهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ
لَهٗٓ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ وَاِنْ يُّرِدْكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَلَا رَآدَّ لِفَضْلِهٖ ؕ يُصِيْبُ بِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ ؕ وَهُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿۱۰۷﴾[64]

A decisive declaration is made here from the tongue of the Prophet (sws). If the disbelievers think that by pressurizing him, they can soften his stance, then this is their

64. Say: People! If you are in doubt about my religion, then listen that I do not worship those whom you worship besides God; I, in fact, worship the God Who gives you death and I have been directed to be among the believers and to devotedly turn to obedience and to be not be among the polytheists. And also to not call upon those besides God who can neither benefit you nor harm you. If you do this, you shall indeed be among the unjust. And if God seizes you in a hardship, there is no one besides Him Who can deliver you from it. And if He intends something good for you, then no one can withhold that favour of His. He blesses whomsoever He intends from His people with it and He is Forgiving and very Merciful.

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naivety. They should dispense with this notion and do what they want to. Such a declaration is reported from every messenger in the final phase. It, in fact, constitutes an acquittal on their part after which the phase of migration arrives. The words "the God Who gives you death" are meant to warn the disbelievers: once God will make them die, they will appear before Him for accountability. Regardless of the attitude they adopt, the Prophet (sws) has been directed to be believer in one God.

Verse 105 further explains the previous verse. The real feature of faith is sincere devotion to the one God and to abstain from every type of polytheism.

Verse 106 points to the baseless nature of polytheism: when without God's permission nothing can cause harm or benefit, then invoking others beside Him is an act of injustice on one's own self and also deprives God of His greatest right.

Verse 107 is still a further elucidation of the previous ones in a different style. It negates all the concepts on the basis of which the Idolaters worshipped their deities and intercessors. The attributes mentioned at the end are meant to direct attention that people should seek refuge with God because it is He Who alone forgives and has mercy. Why should they seek other supports?

قُلْ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَآءَكُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّكُمْ ۚ فَمَنِ اهْتَدٰى فَاِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِيْ لِنَفْسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَاِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا ۚ وَمَآ اَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيْلٍ ﴿١٠٨﴾[65]

The address here is general but it is directed at the Quraysh which are already being addressed from previous verses. It is the final warning from the Prophet (sws) and is the certain truth. Similarly, what they are being taught is the truth as well. The news that they will be punished both in this world and in the next is also true. Thus they should intently listen to the declaration cited. Moreover, the Prophet's responsibility is to only deliver the truth to them and not to forcibly make them accept it.

وَاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوْحٰٓى اِلَيْكَ وَاصْبِرْ حَتّٰى يَحْكُمَ اللّٰهُ ۚ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحٰكِمِيْنَ ﴿١٠٩﴾[66]

This is the final directive given to the Prophet (sws). However much he may face the animosity of the disbelievers, he should persevere on the truth until the decree of God arrives. This decree is referred to earlier in verse 103: ultimately, the Almighty grants victory to His messengers and believers and humiliates their enemies.

This brings me to the end of this *sūrah's* explanation. What I have been able to correctly elucidate is purely because of God's grace and what is incorrect is entirely

65. Tell them: People! The truth has come to you from your Lord. So, he who accepts guidance will do it for himself and he who goes astray will alone bear its consequences and I am not responsible for your faith.

66. And follow what is revealed to you and be steadfast until God passes His judgement and He is the best of judges.

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my own fault. May God protect us from all blemishes and create space in our hearts for what is correct.

وَاٰخِرُ دَعْوٰىهُمْ اَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ (and our last prayer is that gratitude be to God, Lord of the world).

14th November, 1969
4th Ramaḍān, 1389 AH

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Tadabbur i Qur'ān

12 – Sūrah Hūd

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Sūrah Hūd

Theme and Relationship with the Previous Sūrah

This chapter began with Sūrah Yūnus. I have already presented my comprehensive comments on the theme of this chapter at the beginning of that *sūrah*. Since, according to my principle, this *sūrah* forms a pair with Sūrah Yūnus, there is no basic difference between the themes of the two. However, with regard to brevity and detail and in the nature of arguments presented, both have different outlooks. What was stated in brevity in Sūrah Yūnus – like the anecdotes of God's prophets – is stated here in detail. The very first verse of this *sūrah* actually indicates this aspect: كِتٰبٌ اُحۡكِمَتۡ اٰيٰتُهٗ ثُمَّ فُصِّلَتۡ مِنۡ لَّدُنۡ حَكِيۡمٍ خَبِيۡرٍ (This is the Book whose verses were initially concise; then they were explained from the wise and knowledgeable God).

The Qur'ānic name of both is Alif Lām Rā. It is known that commonality of name signifies commonality of meanings.

Analysis of Meanings

Verses (1-4): As a prelude, a trait of the Qur'ān is first clarified: for the purpose of instruction and education of people, principles and basics were revealed at the beginning. They were presented with brevity and in concise form and later they were gradually explained. After that, the message of this Book is explained through the tongue of the Prophet (sws): it invites people to worship the one God and seek repentance from Him; the Prophet (sws) himself is a warner and deliver of glad tidings that people who turn to God for forgiveness will be given the favours and provisions of life by Him until a certain time; those who pay no heed to this will soon face a day of horrific punishment – both in this world and in the next.

Verses (5-6): Sorrow is expressed at people whose hearts do bear witness that the warnings of the Prophet (sws) are absolutely true but in spite of this they are paying no heed to the truth as if they want to hide themselves from God. The fact is that nothing can remain hidden from Him. He knows the hidden and the apparent and is also aware of the secrets of the hearts. It is He Who provides sustenance to all. He knows the place of residence and burial of every person. Everything is written in His register.

Verses (7-11): Those who deny reward and punishment and make fun of God's torment are warned that this world is not a place of amusement. God has created it to see how people behave. When he gives respite to people, the miscreants among them

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start to mock at the Prophet (sws); they contend that he is trying to bluff them through his warning of the punishment. Strange is the nature of people. When they are seized by God, they become dejected and lose hope; however, when they are given respite by Him, they start boasting and bragging. Few people are patient in hardships and grateful for God's favours. It is for such people that there is forgiveness and a great reward lies for them with God.

Verses (12-16): The Prophet (sws) is assured that he should not grieve at his opponents' mockery and demand for miracles; he is a warner and should just carry out his obligation of warning people. God is watching and seeing everything. If the Prophet's opponents say that this Qur'ān has been fabricated, he should ask them to bring ten such fabricated *sūrahs* and also ask for help from the associates they worship besides God. If these associates are not able to help them in this task, they should accept that it has been revealed by God and that there in god except Him. If these people show conceit that they are more blessed in this world than the Prophet (sws) and his companions, then they should know that those who desire the pleasures of this world are give everything in this world and in the hereafter they have nothing but Hell to face.

Verses (17-24): The difference between the mentality of those who accept the message of the Qur'ān and those who evade it is explained. Only they will accept faith who have protected their nature from perversion. They will think that the call of the Qur'ān is the call of their hearts too. Before this, the Book given to Moses (sws) will also provide a further endorsement for them. As for those whose inner light has been put out, they will only believe once they see the fire of Hell. So, their opposition should not make the Prophet (sws) hesitant in any way. Who can be more unjust than those who have imputed falsehood to God and through this falsehood are stopping people from His path. They are not beyond the grasp of God. However, God is giving them respite so that He can fully punish them in the Hereafter. Only they will succeed there who have totally consigned themselves to God and have adhered to faith and done good deeds. The parable of both these groups is that of the blind and deaf and of those who have eyes and ears. Can both be equal?

Verses (25-49): The anecdote of Noah (sws) and his nation is related. In it, the Prophet (sws) is shown that the warnings and glad tidings with which he came to his nation were precisely the same as the ones with which God sent Noah (sws) to his nation. The leaders of his nation made exactly the same excuses as the ones his nation is presenting. Finally, God's torment arrived and they were drowned in the sea. At the end, a summary of this anecdote is presented before the Prophet (sws) in verse 49 in the words: "So, remain steadfast. The ultimate triumph is for those who fear God." In other words, if his people do not desist from their rebellious attitude they too will meet the same fate. God will nevertheless make him and his companions succeed if they remain steadfast in spite of all the opposition they face.

Verses (50-60): The anecdote of the nation of 'Ād is narrated. It too adopted the same

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attitude with their prophet Hūd (sws) as the one adopted by the nation of Noah (sws) with Noah (sws) and by the Quraysh with the Prophet (sws). Ultimately, they met their fate and God made Hūd (sws) succeed. The purpose of narrating this anecdote too is to show the Quraysh their fate in the mirror of history and to assure the Prophet (sws).

Verses (61-68): The anecdotes of the nations of Thamūd and of Ṣāliḥ are narrated for precisely the same purpose as for which the earlier anecdotes were narrated.

Verses (69-83): The anecdote of the nation of Lot (sws) is described for the same objective. As a secondary fact, it also becomes evident from this that the demand of the Quraysh to make an angel descend on them is actually a call for their doom. The advent of an angel is not an ordinary event. When angels come, they have a great divine plan to accomplish. Such is their significance that when a prophet as celebrated as Abraham (sws) sensed that they had come to him, his blood froze. He did not rest assured until he came to know the nature of their mission at hand.

Verses (84-95): The anecdote of Shu'ayb (sws) and the people of Madyan is recounted.

Verses (96-99): The anecdote of Moses (sws) and the Pharaoh is briefly referred to because it was related in detail in the previous *sūrah*.

Verses (101-123): In this closing section of the *sūrah*, the purpose for which the previous anecdotes were narrated is clarified. Then in the light of the consequences they entail, the Prophet (sws) and his companions are given necessary guidance. The Quraysh are warned to learn a lesson from the history of their country otherwise they should be prepared to face the consequences.

It will become evident even from a perfunctory look at the meanings of this *sūrah* that the whole of it is a comprehensive sermon on a prescribed purpose.

Now, with the name of God, I begin the explanation of this *sūrah* in accordance with my principles. So help me God!

Section I: Verses (1-24)

Text and Translation

بِسۡمِ اللّٰہِ الرَّحۡمٰنِ الرَّحِیۡمِ

الٓرٰ ۟ کِتٰبٌ اُحۡکِمَتۡ اٰیٰتُہٗ ثُمَّ فُصِّلَتۡ مِنۡ لَّدُنۡ حَکِیۡمٍ خَبِیۡرٍ ۙ﴿۱﴾ اَلَّا تَعۡبُدُوۡۤا اِلَّا اللّٰہَ ؕ اِنَّنِیۡ لَکُمۡ مِّنۡہُ نَذِیۡرٌ وَّ بَشِیۡرٌ ۙ﴿۲﴾ وَّ
اَنِ اسۡتَغۡفِرُوۡا رَبَّکُمۡ ثُمَّ تُوۡبُوۡۤا اِلَیۡہِ یُمَتِّعۡکُمۡ مَّتَاعًا حَسَنًا اِلٰۤی اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّی وَّ یُؤۡتِ کُلَّ ذِیۡ فَضۡلٍ فَضۡلَہٗ ؕ وَ اِنۡ تَوَلَّوۡا فَاِنِّیۡۤ
اَخَافُ عَلَیۡکُمۡ عَذَابَ یَوۡمٍ کَبِیۡرٍ ؕ﴿۳﴾ اِلَی اللّٰہِ مَرۡجِعُکُمۡ ۚ وَ ہُوَ عَلٰی کُلِّ شَیۡءٍ قَدِیۡرٌ ﴿۴﴾ اَلَاۤ اِنَّہُمۡ یَثۡنُوۡنَ صُدُوۡرَہُمۡ لِیَسۡتَخۡفُوۡا
مِنۡہُ ؕ اَلَا حِیۡنَ یَسۡتَغۡشُوۡنَ ثِیَابَہُمۡ ۙ یَعۡلَمُ مَا یُسِرُّوۡنَ وَ مَا یُعۡلِنُوۡنَ ۚ اِنَّہٗ عَلِیۡمٌۢ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوۡرِ ﴿۵﴾ وَ مَا مِنۡ دَآبَّۃٍ فِی

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الْاَرْضِ اِلَّا عَلَى اللّٰهِ رِزْقُهَا وَيَعْلَمُ مُسْتَقَرَّهَا وَمُسْتَوْدَعَهَا ؕ كُلٌّ فِيْ كِتٰبٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ۝٦ وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ فِيْ
سِتَّةِ اَيَّامٍ وَّكَانَ عَرْشُهٗ عَلَى الْمَآءِ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ اَيُّكُمْ اَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ؕ وَلَئِنْ قُلْتَ اِنَّكُمْ مَّبْعُوْثُوْنَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ الْمَوْتِ لَيَقُوْلَنَّ
الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ۝٧ وَلَئِنْ اَخَّرْنَا عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابَ اِلٰٓى اُمَّةٍ مَّعْدُوْدَةٍ لَّيَقُوْلُنَّ مَا يَحْبِسُهٗ ؕ اَلَا يَوْمَ
يَاْتِيْهِمْ لَيْسَ مَصْرُوْفًا عَنْهُمْ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ۝٨ وَلَئِنْ اَذَقْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ مِنَّا رَحْمَةً ثُمَّ نَزَعْنٰهَا مِنْهُ ۚ اِنَّهٗ
لَيَـُٔوْسٌ كَفُوْرٌ ۝٩ وَلَئِنْ اَذَقْنٰهُ نَعْمَآءَ بَعْدَ ضَرَّآءَ مَسَّتْهُ لَيَقُوْلَنَّ ذَهَبَ السَّيِّاٰتُ عَنِّيْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ لَفَرِحٌ فَخُوْرٌ ۝١٠ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ
صَبَرُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّاَجْرٌ كَبِيْرٌ ۝١١ فَلَعَلَّكَ تَارِكٌۢ بَعْضَ مَا يُوْحٰٓى اِلَيْكَ وَضَآئِقٌۢ بِهٖ صَدْرُكَ
اَنْ يَّقُوْلُوْا لَوْلَآ اُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ كَنْزٌ اَوْ جَآءَ مَعَهٗ مَلَكٌ ؕ اِنَّمَآ اَنْتَ نَذِيْرٌ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّكِيْلٌ ۝١٢ اَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ افْتَرٰىهُ ؕ
قُلْ فَاْتُوْا بِعَشْرِ سُوَرٍ مِّثْلِهٖ مُفْتَرَيٰتٍ وَّادْعُوْا مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ۝١٣ فَاِلَّمْ يَسْتَجِيْبُوْا لَكُمْ
فَاعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّمَآ اُنْزِلَ بِعِلْمِ اللّٰهِ وَاَنْ لَّآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ فَهَلْ اَنْتُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ ۝١٤ مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيْدُ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِيْنَتَهَا نُوَفِّ
اِلَيْهِمْ اَعْمَالَهُمْ فِيْهَا وَهُمْ فِيْهَا لَا يُبْخَسُوْنَ ۝١٥ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ اِلَّا النَّارُ ۖ وَحَبِطَ مَا صَنَعُوْا فِيْهَا وَ
بٰطِلٌ مَّا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝١٦ اَفَمَنْ كَانَ عَلٰى بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ وَيَتْلُوْهُ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْهُ وَمِنْ قَبْلِهٖ كِتٰبُ مُوْسٰٓى اِمَامًا وَّرَحْمَةً ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ
يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِهٖ ؕ وَمَنْ يَّكْفُرْ بِهٖ مِنَ الْاَحْزَابِ فَالنَّارُ مَوْعِدُهٗ ۚ فَلَا تَكُ فِيْ مِرْيَةٍ مِّنْهُ ۗ اِنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا
يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ۝١٧ وَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ يُعْرَضُوْنَ عَلٰى رَبِّهِمْ وَيَقُوْلُ الْاَشْهَادُ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ الَّذِيْنَ كَذَبُوْا عَلٰى
رَبِّهِمْ ۚ اَلَا لَعْنَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَى الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ۝١٨ الَّذِيْنَ يَصُدُّوْنَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَيَبْغُوْنَهَا عِوَجًا ؕ وَهُمْ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ كٰفِرُوْنَ ۝١٩
اُولٰٓئِكَ لَمْ يَكُوْنُوْا مُعْجِزِيْنَ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مِنْ اَوْلِيَآءَ ۘ يُضٰعَفُ لَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ ؕ مَا كَانُوْا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ
السَّمْعَ وَمَا كَانُوْا يُبْصِرُوْنَ ۝٢٠ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ خَسِرُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ۝٢١ لَا جَرَمَ اَنَّهُمْ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ هُمُ
الْاَخْسَرُوْنَ ۝٢٢ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَاَخْبَتُوْٓا اِلٰى رَبِّهِمْ ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ الْجَنَّةِ ۚ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ۝٢٣
مَثَلُ الْفَرِيْقَيْنِ كَالْاَعْمٰى وَالْاَصَمِّ وَالْبَصِيْرِ وَالسَّمِيْعِ ؕ هَلْ يَسْتَوِيٰنِ مَثَلًا ؕ اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ۝٢٤

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Ever-Merciful.

This is Sūrah Alif Lām Rā. This is the Book whose verses were initially concise; then they were explained from the wise and knowledgeable God so that you do not worship anyone except Him. I am from Him a warner and a deliverer of glad tidings. And that seek forgiveness from your Lord, then turn to Him; He will abundantly provide you until a fixed period of time and will bless every person worthy of favour

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with His favour. And if you turn away, I fear for you the torment of a horrific day. All of you have to return to God alone and He has power over all things. (1-4)

Do you observe them; they turn away their chests to hide from Him. Beware! When they cover themselves with sheets, even then they are before His eyes. He knows what they conceal and what they reveal. He is even fully aware of the secrets in the hearts. And the sustenance of every single living being on earth is God's responsibility. And He knows his place of dwelling and the place of his burial. Everything is written in an open Book. (5-6)

And it is He Who created the heavens and the earth in six days and His throne was on water to test you as to which of you is better regarding deeds. And if you say: [People!] You will be raised to life again after death, these disbelievers say: "This is only plain magic." And if We defer the torment from them for a while, they ask: "What is withholding it?" Listen! The day it catches them, it will not be averted from them and they will be surrounded by precisely what they are making fun of. And if We bless a human being with some favour; then deprive him of it, he becomes dejected and ungrateful. And if after some hardship that has inflicted him We endow him with a favour, he says: "My hardships have gone away," and he becomes arrogant and boastful. Only those are an exception to this who are steadfast and do righteous deeds. For them is forgiveness and a great reward. (7-11)

Perhaps, you will be leaving out a part of what is being revealed to you and it is distressing you that these people will say: "Why was not a treasure revealed to him or why was not an angel sent with him?" So, you are only a warner and everything is entrusted to God. Do they say: "He has fabricated it himself?" Tell them: Then you also bring forth ten such fabricated *sūrahs* and call in whoever you can except God, if you are truthful. However, if they do not come to your rescue, know that it has been revealed with God's knowledge and that no one except God is to be worshipped. Then do you now accept? (12-14)

Those who desire the life of the world and its provisions, We reward them for their deeds here and no loss do they suffer in this. It is these people for whom there is nothing but Fire in the Hereafter. And whatever they have done will all be wiped out and in vain are all their deeds. (15-16)

Can a person who is on a clear proof from his Lord, then another witness also comes to him after it from his Lord and before this the Book of Moses is also present as a guide and mercy reject this Qur'ān and those who are deprived of insight be equal? Only such people shall profess faith in it and those from among the groups who reject it, for them the fire is the promised abode. Therefore, do not be in any doubt about it because it is the truth from your Lord but most people do not believe in it. And who can be more unjust than those who ascribe falsehood to God? They will be called before their Lord and the witnesses will bear witness that these are the ones who had fabricated a lie on God. Listen! God's curse is on the unjust who stop [people] from the

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path of God and seek to distort it, and it is they who deny the Hereafter. They were not beyond God's grasp in the earth nor do they have any supporter except God. They will be given a two-fold torment. They could neither hear nor see. It is they who have put themselves into a loss and what they had fabricated will be lost from them. It is these people who shall necessarily be in loss in the Hereafter. As for those who professed faith and did righteous deeds and who bent before their Lord, it is they who are the dwellers of Paradise. They shall abide in it forever. The parable of both these groups is as if one is blind and deaf and one can see and hear. Will both be the same? Do you people not think? (17-24)

Explanation

الٓرٰ ۟ كِتٰبٌ اُحْكِمَتْ اٰيٰتُهٗ ثُمَّ فُصِّلَتْ مِنْ لَّدُنْ حَكِيْمٍ خَبِيْرٍ ۙ﴿۱﴾ اَلَّا تَعْبُدُوْۤا اِلَّا اللّٰهَ ؕ اِنَّنِيْ لَكُمْ مِّنْهُ نَذِيْرٌ وَّبَشِيْرٌ ۙ﴿۲﴾ وَّاَنِ اسْتَغْفِرُوْا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوْبُوْۤا اِلَيْهِ يُمَتِّعْكُمْ مَّتَاعًا حَسَنًا اِلٰۤى اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى وَّيُؤْتِ كُلَّ ذِيْ فَضْلٍ فَضْلَهٗ ؕ وَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاِنِّيْۤ اَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ كَبِيْرٍ ؕ﴿۳﴾ اِلَى اللّٰهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ ۚ وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ۖ﴿۴﴾[1]

Alif Lām Rā is the Qur'ānic name of this *sūrah*. The previous *sūrah* also has the same name. This signifies that the themes and subjects of both are similar. Thus readers will see ahead that only difference between the two *sūrah* is that of brevity and detail. The aspects that were dealt with rather concisely in the previous *sūrah* are explained in this one in detail. Though this difference is evident in every aspect, it is especially evident in the narration of incident. This style of detail after brevity is adopted by the Qur'ān is not merely to create variety, it is this style which is blessed and beneficial for teaching and instruction.

The word احکام means to make something very closely-knit and impart strength to it. It is used for a cloth that is treated to make thick. The purpose of using this word for Qur'ānic verses is to show that initially the teachings of the Qur'ān were revealed in closely-knot, brief and comprehensive sentences. Then gradually they became elaborate and detailed. Thus *sūrahs* that were revealed in the initial period of Makkah were a perfect example of brevity and being concise and comprehensive. The basic tenets of religion were encapsulated in a few words. Gradually, they were elucidated until in the time of Madīnah these basic things were explained in an elaborate way and as an all-embracing system of life. By referring to this fact, it is meant to direct the

1. This is Sūrah Alif Lām Rā. This is the Book whose verses were initially concise; then they were explained from the wise and knowledgeable God so that you do not worship anyone except Him. I am from Him a warner and a deliverer of glad tidings. And that seek forgiveness from your Lord, then turn to Him; He will abundantly provide you until a fixed period of time and will bless every person worthy of favour with His favour. And if you turn away, I fear for you the torment of a horrific day. All of you have to return to God alone and He has power over all things.

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attention of people to the special arrangement made by the Almighty in this Book for their education and instruction. It may be noted that this way of gradual elaboration and elucidation was not adopted in the Torah. In fact, a greater part of it was revealed in a single episode. The attributes of God at the end are meant to show that only the wise God knows how He can frame the treasure of wisdom in a few words and then it is the majesty of the knowledgeable God to explain the vast and unfathomable meanings enshrined in these words.

As referred to by the verse, the basic message of this Book is that people should not worship anyone except God. This message forms the basis and crux of religion. God's messengers have delivered warnings and glad tidings based on this message. They gave glad tidings of God's mercy and graciousness to those who accept this message and warned those who showed aversion to it of a horrible torment. Thus it was this obligation of delivering warnings and glad tidings that the Prophet (sws) was entrusted with.

The verses then mention the aspect of glad tidings: people should seek forgiveness from their Lord and turn to Him.

Next they mention the aspect of warnings: if they turn away from this message, they should be prepared to face a terrible torment. The torment here refers to the one which visits those who reject their respective messenger. Those who profess belief in him are given a period of life and made to succeed. This respite continues until people remain on the right path. However, those who reject the messenger are totally wiped out by some horrible calamity once the truth is communicated to them in its ultimate form.

Evident from these verses is that repentance has two important components: seeking forgiveness and repentance. The first means that a person seeks God's forgiveness for his sin and promises not to do it again and the second means that he turns to God and adopts the right path to which he has been guided by God. If a person does not desist from his sin and evade the right path, he may repent a hundred times but this repentance will only be a joke.

At the end, people are warned of the punishment in the Hereafter; earlier they had been warned of it in this world.

اَلَآ اِنَّهُمۡ يَثۡنُوۡنَ صُدُوۡرَهُمۡ لِيَسۡتَخۡفُوۡا مِنۡهُ ؕ اَلَا حِيۡنَ يَسۡتَغۡشُوۡنَ ثِيَابَهُمۡ ۙ يَعۡلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّوۡنَ وَمَا يُعۡلِنُوۡنَ ۚ اِنَّهٗ عَلِيۡمٌۢ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوۡرِ ﴿۵﴾[2]

The word ثنی means "to turn away and cover." It is common observation that when a person does not want to listen to anything because of arrogance and hate, he goes away from that place by shaking his shoulder and turning way his chest. In verse 9 of

2. Do you observe them; they turn away their chests to hide from Him. Beware! When they cover themselves with sheets, even then they are before His eyes. He knows what they conceal and what they reveal. He is even fully aware of the secrets in the hearts.

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Sūrah al-Ḥajj, this state of a person is described by the words: ثَانِيَ عِطْفِهٖ (inebriated with arrogance). Here the words used are يَثْنُوْنَ صُدُوْرَهُمْ. Another form of this is that a person covers himself with a piece of cloth and leaves that place. This is depicted in verse 7 of Sūrah Nūḥ thus: وَاِنِّيْ كُلَّمَا دَعَوْتُهُمْ لِتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ جَعَلُوْٓا اَصَابِعَهُمْ فِيْٓ اٰذَانِهِمْ وَاسْتَغْشَوْا ثِيَابَهُمْ وَاَصَرُّوْا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا اسْتِكْبَارًا [3]

Now the verse under discussion portrays the attitude of the arrogant Quraysh in response to the warnings of the Prophet (sws): they would just turn their chests and walk away from that place and think that in this way they had secured themselves from God and His warnings. Among others, a foolishness of a person is that he tries to evade facing the reality and thinks that the reality is no more. The fact is that his aversion does not affect the reality in any way. If an ostrich hides its head in the sand when it sees a storm, then this does not ward off the storm. In the same way, if God is warning these people, then not listening to Him is a very foolish scheme. Where can a person hide from God? He is with people even when they cover themselves with a cloth. He knows the hidden and the apparent as well as the secrets of the hearts.

وَمَا مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ فِي الْاَرْضِ اِلَّا عَلَى اللّٰهِ رِزْقُهَا وَيَعْلَمُ مُسْتَقَرَّهَا وَمُسْتَوْدَعَهَا ؕ كُلٌّ فِيْ كِتٰبٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ۝ [4]

The words مُسْتَقَرٌّ and مُسْتَوْدَعٌ have been discussed in detail in verse 98 of Sūrah al-An‘ām. The former refers to the place where a person spends his life and the latter to his place of burial. This is actually a further explanation of the extent of God’s knowledge mentioned in the previous verse. None can run away from Him.

The verse implies that wherever a living being is, whether at the summit of a mountain, at the bottom of an ocean, in a dense forest or in a populated city, it is receiving its ordained sustenance from God. Then can anything remain hidden from Him? Also concealed in the verse is a rebuke for those who try to hide from God. It is pity that these people are trying to evade the words of the God on whose nourishment they actually thrive.

The word مُسْتَوْدَعٌ is used for the burial place as a subtle reminder: no one should think that a person who has passed away has been obliterated; he is in fact entrusted to the earth and a day will come when the earth will return him to his Lord.

The last sentence implies that nothing has been left out from the book and there will no botheration in finding anything from it.

وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ فِيْ سِتَّةِ اَيَّامٍ وَّكَانَ عَرْشُهٗ عَلَى الْمَآءِ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ اَيُّكُمْ اَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ؕ وَلَئِنْ قُلْتَ اِنَّكُمْ مَّبْعُوْثُوْنَ

3. And whenever I called upon them to repent so that You may forgive them, they thrust their fingers in their ears, drew their cloaks over them, persisted in their stubbornness and showed great arrogance.

4. And the sustenance of every single living being on earth is God’s responsibility. And He knows his place of dwelling and the place of his burial. Everything is written in an open Book.

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مِنۢ بَعۡدِ الۡمَوۡتِ لَيَقُوۡلَنَّ الَّذِيۡنَ كَفَرُوۡۤا اِنۡ هٰذَاۤ اِلَّا سِحۡرٌ مُّبِيۡنٌ ۝[5]

This verse mentions the reward and punishment people would be warned of. However, instead of acknowledging it and preparing themselves for it, they made fun of it.

The six days referred to here are not six earth days; they are six days of God. Each day of God is equal to thousands of earth days. They can be referred to as periods. The creation of the world in six gradual periods and then reaching its culmination shows that its creation is not an accidental happening: in fact, its creator has brought it into existence with a certain scheme and sequence and with an underlying wisdom. All this shows that it has not been created without a purpose; in reality, it has a tremendous purpose which shall necessarily be achieved.

The word "throne" signifies the rule of God. Before land appeared on his earth, it was all water and was governed by God. Then land emerged from water and various life forms came into being and gradually this whole world became inhabited. Precisely this is mentioned in the Torah as well though its translators have mixed-up its meaning. In the very first verse of the Book of Genesis, the words are: "Darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."

The verse states that this elaborate arrangement bears witness to the fact that this world is not a place of amusement or entertainment. It has not been created without an objective. Human beings who occupy a central position in this universe and for which it seems all these things have been created will not be left to go scot free. They are not been made only to enjoy the luxuries of life and then just go away. If this happens, it would mean that the creator of this universe has done a useless act; whereas, every particle of it shows His power, wisdom and mercy. This clearly signifies that this notion of creation being a useless act is illogical. Now, if this is illogical, then it has to be acknowledged that the freedom given to human beings in this world to exercise their will and their awareness of good and evil show that God is testing them. He wants to see if they adopt the path of virtue out of their own free will or that of vice; they shall necessarily be held accountable before their Lord and be treated in accordance with their deeds. The universe being created in six days was also mentioned in Sūrah Yūnus earlier. Here there are some additional words: "as to which of you is better regarding deeds" which shows the purpose of this elaborate arrangement found in creating this world.

If the Prophet (sws) tries to convey this self-evident reality to these people that they will be raised to life after death for the purpose of accountability, they regard this statement to be magic instead of acknowledging it to be an epitome of eloquence.

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5. And it is He Who created the heavens and the earth in six days and His throne was on water to test you as to which of you is better regarding deeds. And if you say: [People!] You will be raised to life again after death, these disbelievers say: "This is only plain magic."

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وَلَئِنْ اَخَّرْنَا عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابَ اِلٰٓى اُمَّةٍ مَّعْدُوْدَةٍ لَّيَقُوْلُنَّ مَا يَحْبِسُهٗ ؕ اَلَا يَوْمَ يَاْتِيْهِمْ لَيْسَ مَصْرُوْفًا عَنْهُمْ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿۸﴾ وَلَئِنْ اَذَقْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ مِنَّا رَحْمَةً ثُمَّ نَزَعْنٰهَا مِنْهُ اِنَّهٗ لَيَـُٔوْسٌ كَفُوْرٌ ﴿۹﴾ وَلَئِنْ اَذَقْنٰهُ نَعْمَآءَ بَعْدَ ضَرَّآءَ مَسَّتْهُ لَيَقُوْلَنَّ ذَهَبَ السَّيِّاٰتُ عَنِّىْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ لَفَرِحٌ فَخُوْرٌ ﴿۱۰﴾ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ صَبَرُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّاَجْرٌ كَبِيْرٌ ﴿۱۱﴾[6]

The word اُمَّةٍ is used here in its exact literary meaning of "period." A similar usage can be seen in verse 45 of Sūrah Yūsuf: وَقَالَ الَّذِىْ نَجَا مِنْهُمَا وَادَّكَرَ بَعْدَ اُمَّةٍ.[7]

The previous verse depicted their mockery at being raised to life again. This verse says that this attitude of mockery is also found in them regarding the torment they would necessarily face in this world if they reject the messenger.

This audacity is only worth expressing a pity. Once this torment alights neither will they themselves be able to ward it off, nor will their deities and intercessors be able to do so. The whirlpool of this torment – which they are making fun of – will engulf them.

Though a general word "human being" is used, it refers to the same people which are under discussion. When the purpose is to turn away from a stubborn person, then at times instead of addressing him directly, a principle statement is given which fulfils the purpose of evasion and the statement becomes more forceful and potent. Here too this style has been adopted and some very subtle examples of it can be seen later. I will *inshaAllāh* elaborate on it at an appropriate instance.

The verse implies that instead of being grateful at the provisions and sustenance God has provided them with, their conceit makes them make fun of the warnings sounded to them. They become stubborn enough to demand the punishment they are being promised. This arrogance and stubbornness has no basis. If they are jolted even a little by God, they cry out in pain.

People who have accepted faith and done righteous deeds are an exception to this attitude. Adversity makes them strong and they remain patient expecting God's mercy to soon come to them and when they are blessed with God's favour, they become grateful and do righteous deeds instead of becoming conceited. Hardships strengthen their patience and favours make them more righteous and grateful. Such people are the epitome of humanity and for them are forgiveness and a great reward.

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6. And if We defer the torment from them for a while, they ask: "What is withholding it?" Listen! The day it catches them, it will not be averted from them and they will be surrounded by precisely what they are making fun of. And if We bless a human being with some favour; then deprive him of it, he becomes dejected and ungrateful. And if after some hardship that has inflicted him We endow him with a favour, he says: "My hardships have gone away," and he becomes arrogant and boastful. Only those are an exception to this who are steadfast and do righteous deeds. For them is forgiveness and a great reward.

7. And of the two prisoners who had been freed and he remembered after a long period.

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As for those who show conceit when being blessed with favours and lose hope in hardships, this attitude will lead them to Hell.

فَلَعَلَّكَ تَارِكٌۢ بَعْضَ مَا يُوْحٰٓى اِلَيْكَ وَضَآىِٕقٌۢ بِهٖ صَدْرُكَ اَنْ يَّقُوْلُوْا لَوْلَآ اُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ كَنْزٌ اَوْ جَآءَ مَعَهٗ مَلَكٌ ؕ اِنَّمَآ اَنْتَ نَذِيْرٌ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىْءٍ وَّكِيْلٌ ﴿۱۲﴾[8]

This verse sounds assurance to the Prophet (sws).

God is watching over everything. The Prophet's responsibility is not to force them to accept his message. He has nothing more to do than to warn them. His hard work and profound efforts are known to God and so are the pranks played by the disbelievers. He will deal with them the way they deserve and when He will do so, no one will be able to stop Him.

It should be kept in mind that the purpose of giving such directives to the Prophet (sws) was not because he was showing reluctance in delivering some part of the divine revelation or wanted to leave it. In the wake of hardships and difficult circumstances he was facing, this directive was meant to make him stronger in his stance and make him confine his responsibilities to the circle prescribed. The harshness in address on such occasions is directed at his addressees and not towards the Prophet (sws).

اَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ افْتَرٰىهُ ؕ قُلْ فَاْتُوْا بِعَشْرِ سُوَرٍ مِّثْلِهٖ مُفْتَرَيٰتٍ وَّادْعُوْا مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿۱۳﴾[9]

This question is meant to express wonder. The earlier objections were expressed in a simple style. However, regarding the Qur'ān to be a Book concocted by the Prophet (sws) was a very strange allegation, especially from people who had a deep literary appreciation and understood the finer aspects of language and thoroughly valued brevity and eloquence. They also had with them the compositions of their top poets and speeches of their outstanding orators with which they could compare the Qur'ān. For this reason, this objection is stated by expressing amazement: if these shameless individuals think that this Book has been concocted by him, then this matter can be easily decided with the challenge stated in the verse.

The last part of the first verse can mean: if they are truthful that the ones they worship besides God are His partners; in this case, this is the best opportunity for them to help in authoring something like the Qur'ān. This is because the sovereignty of these partners would be threatened the most by this Book.

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8. Perhaps, you will be leaving out a part of what is being revealed to you and it is distressing you that these people will say: "Why was not a treasure revealed to him or why was not an angel sent with him?" So, you are only a warner and everything is entrusted to God.

9. Do they say: "He has fabricated it himself?" Tell them: Then you also bring forth ten such fabricated *sūrahs* and call in whoever you can except God, if you are truthful.

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This last part can also mean: if they are truthful in their claim that this Qur'ān has been authored by the Prophet (sws) but he falsely ascribes it to God in order to impress people. In verses 33-34 of Sūrah al-Ṭūr, it is stated: اَمۡ يَقُوۡلُوۡنَ تَقَوَّلَهٗ ۚ بَلۡ لَّا يُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ فَلۡيَاۡتُوۡا بِحَدِيۡثٍ مِّثۡلِهٖۤ اِنۡ كَانُوۡا صٰدِقِيۡنَ.[10] It is also evident from these verses that those who regarded the Qur'ān to be fabricated did not really have any conviction in this allegation; they only wanted to use it as an excuse to not profess faith in it.

In this *sūrah*, they are asked to produce ten *sūrahs* like it. In verse 38 of Sūrah Yūnus the demand is to produce just one *sūrah*. In verse 24 of Sūrah al-Baqarah, they are also told to produce one similar *sūrah.* In verse 88 of Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl, they are asked to produce a similar Qur'ān. I In the verses of Sūrah al-Ṭūr cited earlier, the demand is also to produce a Qur'ān, regardless of whether it is in the form of one *sūrah* or ten or in the form of the whole Qur'ān. Generally, people think that there is a gradual sequence in these challenges thrown by the Qur'ān. So, first they were asked to produce a book similar to the Qur'ān. When they were not able to do so, the demand was reduced to ten *sūrahs* and when they could also not do this, they were finally asked to produce just one *sūrah* like it; however, they could not muster the courage to even do this. Though this seems to be a very logical view, but it can only be verified if the period of revelation of each of these *sūrahs* in which the challenges are mentioned can be ascertained. Since this is difficult to verify, in my opinion, the correct view is that in the very beginning, the challenge thrown to them was to produce a book like the Qur'ān, as is evident from the Sūrah al-Ṭūr verses whether in the form of ten *sūrahs* or one. Later, this rather concisely stated demand was explained in accordance with the circumstances that they could meet this challenge in any manner – whether by producing a single *sūrah* or ten. In my opinion, it is also not correct to regard this to be challenge in the general sense. Challenges are thrown to those about whom one can say that they have the courage to try and meet them. When it is evident that the real purpose is to merely put up an excuse to evade the reality, it is better to make a profound demand at the very beginning instead of making it pass through a gradual sequence.

فَاِلَّمۡ يَسۡتَجِيۡبُوۡا لَكُمۡ فَاعۡلَمُوۡۤا اَنَّمَاۤ اُنۡزِلَ بِعِلۡمِ اللّٰهِ وَاَنۡ لَّاۤ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ فَهَلۡ اَنۡتُمۡ مُّسۡلِمُوۡنَ ﴿۱۴﴾[11]

The expression إِسْتَجَابَ لَهُ would mean "he answered his question" or "he fulfilled his need." When this word is used in relation to God, it would mean that He accepted his supplication.

In the previous verse, they were addressed in an indirect way. Now in this one, the

10. Do they say that he himself has concocted the Qur'ān? In fact, they do not want to accept faith. Then let them produce a scripture like it, if they are truthful.

11. However, if they do not come to your rescue, know that it has been revealed with God's knowledge and that no one except God is to be worshipped. Then do you now accept?

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address has become direct if their deities and intercessors are not able to help them in making them a similar Qur'ān, then they must accept that this book is from God, as claimed by the Prophet (sws). It is not the case, as they allege, that it has been fabricated.

It is evident from the words "that it has been revealed with God's knowledge" that the real aspect of the Qur'ān being a miraculous book is that the treasure of knowledge and wisdom it constitutes is one that could only have been bestowed by God.

The words "and that no one except God is to be worshipped" form the second self-obvious consequence in the case when the challenge thrown by it not be answered. Thus the deities they have set up only exist in their imagination; they do not exist in reality. And if they do exist, then this is the time that they should come up with some feat to save their own reputation and theirs too. If even at this precarious moment their honour does not come to their rescue, then what good are they?

The words "then do you now accept" carry the element of exhortation as well that of rebuke. The implication is that they have the full opportunity to prove their claim and they can even call their deities to help them in this task. But if in spite of all this they cannot accomplish this task, will they be prepared to accept faith.

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيْدُ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِيْنَتَهَا نُوَفِّ اِلَيْهِمْ اَعْمَالَهُمْ فِيْهَا وَهُمْ فِيْهَا لَا يُبْخَسُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ اِلَّا النَّارُ ۖ وَحَبِطَ مَا صَنَعُوْا فِيْهَا وَبٰطِلٌ مَّا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾[12]

In verse 12 earlier, it has been cited that these people would use the lack of means and resources possessed by the Prophet (sws) and his companions as an argument against his prophethood. They contended that since they had far more means and resources then them, it meant that they were better in the eyes of God than them. So what then is the meaning of warning them of God's torment. They reckoned that if they were condemned and had earned God's wrath, would they never have been given such a luxurious life while their opponents faced such scarcity and affliction. Had this been the case, the Prophet's companions would have been rich and affluent and they would have been forced to comply to them.

Both these verses answer this misconception: the pleasures of this world are not given as a reward of good deeds and thus those who do not do good deeds will not be given such a reward. They are given to both the virtuous and the wrongdoers. However, the account of those who do not care about the hereafter is settled right here and they have nothing but Hell to face in the hereafter. Since they do not do any deed keeping in view the hereafter, all their deeds will not carry any weight there. Without

12. Those who desire the life of the world and its provisions, We reward them for their deeds here and no loss do they suffer in this. It is these people for whom there is nothing but Fire in the Hereafter. And whatever they have done will all be wiped out and in vain are all their deeds.

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the concept of the hereafter, this world is totally a baseless creation and whatever is done by focusing all attention on it is baseless too, even though it may seem to be a pious undertaking. This topic is discussed in the Qur'ān at various places. Thus, for example, in verses 18-20 of Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl, it is stated:

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيْدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ عَجَّلْنَا لَهٗ فِيْهَا مَا نَشَآءُ لِمَنْ نُّرِيْدُ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا لَهٗ جَهَنَّمَ ۚ يَصْلٰىهَا مَذْمُوْمًا مَّدْحُوْرًا وَ مَنْ اَرَادَ الْاٰخِرَةَ وَ سَعٰى لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَ هُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَّشْكُوْرًا كُلًّا نُّمِدُّ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ وَ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ مِنْ عَطَآءِ رَبِّكَ ؕ وَ مَا كَانَ عَطَآءُ رَبِّكَ مَحْظُوْرًا[13]

It is also evident from the words "for whomsoever We want and in whatever quantity We want" of the above cited verses that those who are after the pleasures of this world are also given as much as God wants and it is also given to only those who God wills. It is not the case that such people can obtain whatever they want to. It is God's authority and wisdom that decides such a bestowal. Similarly, the words "and also strives for it the way it is befitting and is also a believer" make it evident that only that effort to seek the hereafter carries weight in the eyes of God which is done with faith and sincerity and also done in a way that is befitting for the hereafter. If there is any element of show-off or polytheism in it or is merely done by dreaming for Paradise by making tall claims by the tongue without doing righteous deeds, then such soothing dreams have no value in the eyes of God.

اَفَمَنْ كَانَ عَلٰى بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ وَ يَتْلُوْهُ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْهُ وَ مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ كِتٰبُ مُوْسٰٓى اِمَامًا وَّ رَحْمَةً ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِهٖ ؕ وَ مَنْ يَّكْفُرْ بِهٖ مِنَ الْاَحْزَابِ فَالنَّارُ مَوْعِدُهٗ ۚ فَلَا تَكُ فِيْ مِرْيَةٍ مِّنْهُ ۫ اِنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ وَ لٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿۱۷﴾[14]

The Prophet (sws) is sounded assurance here that the real ailment of those who are putting up excuses to evade the Qur'ān is that their inner divine spark has been extinguished. Such people can never profess faith in the Qur'ān. Only they profess this faith whose nature is secure from perversion. Such people have a clear testimony

13. He who wants the world, We give it for whomsoever We want and in whatever quantity We want. After that, We have Hell for him which he shall enter humiliated and accursed. And he who seeks the Hereafter, and also strives for it the way it is befitting and is also a believer, then it is such people whose effort will be accepted. We help everyone with the bounty of your Lord; to these also and to those as well. And the bounty of your Lord is not withheld from anyone.

14. Can a person who is on a clear proof from his Lord, then another witness also comes to him after it from his Lord and before this the Book of Moses is also present as a guide and mercy reject this Qur'ān and those who are deprived of insight be equal? Only such people shall profess faith in it and those from among the groups who reject it, for them the fire is the promised abode. Therefore, do not be in any doubt about it because it is the truth from your Lord but most people do not believe in it.

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in their nature in favour of the basic truths. Then after this, when a second testimony comes to them in the form of the Qur'ān, they think that it is the call of their hearts. They think that whatever they are finding in their hearts is being reinforced by this heavenly testifier too.

In such interrogative sentences, at times, parallel clauses are suppressed which are evident because of concomitant indications. The overall meaning would be: Will people who have these two sparks and those who are deprived of all sparks be equal in professing faith in the Qur'ān? This cannot be. Only they will profess faith in it who have a divine spark in their nature and are also aware that before this Book, a similar one has been revealed to Moses (sws) as guidance and mercy. For such people, the Qur'ān is indeed a cherished Book. When they listen to it, they feel that whatever they find in their nature is corroborated by a testifier from God. Thus, it is such people who will profess faith. In other words, those who are putting up lame excuses in opposing this Book are themselves to blame. The eyes of their hearts have become blind. Nothing good can be expected from them.

The word بَيِّنَةٌ means a clear and conclusive argument. Here, as indicated earlier, it refers to the spark of guidance found in human nature: this innate guidance from God is meant to distinguish between basic good and evil. The more a person protects his nature from the wicked influences of the outer world, the stronger this spark of innate guidance becomes. Thus, in the prophets of God this inner spark is the strongest. Before receiving the radiance of divine revelation, their inner selves are already radiant with this innate guidance. For them, the status of divine revelation is not that of light upon darkness; rather, it is light upon light (نُوْرٌ عَلٰى نُوْرٌ), as indicated in verse of 35 of Sūrah al-Nūr. Further ahead in verses 28, 63 and 88 of the *sūrah* under discussion, this word (بَيِّنَةٌ) occurs in precisely this meaning. People who accept the message of the prophets have this inner spark in them to various extent. The stronger this spark in a person, the more initiative he will take in accepting this message and become a supporter of a prophet's message in the corresponding proportion. As for those who extinguish their inner spark because of their misdeeds, they are caught in the whirlpool of darkness (ظُلُمَاتٌ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ), as stated in verse 40 of Sūrah al-Nūr.

Here it needs to be kept in mind that for words which are feminine in the unreal sense, it is not necessary to bring a pronoun that collocates with the apparent structure of such feminine words. A masculine pronoun can be used for them if the actual connotation of the word is masculine. Thus here the pronoun in يَتْلُوْهُ is in the mascculine. This is because this masculine pronoun actually refers to masculine entities like نور, سلطان and برهان, as used at other instances in the Qur'ān.

The word يَتْلُوْ means "to come after or later than something." The antecedent of the pronoun in مِّنْهُ is God. First, out of His graciousness, He innately gave a person the awareness of realities to which the Qur'ān calls him. He further made him listen to all this record to leave him with no excuse. The word شَاهِدٌ means the divine revelation,

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the actual manifestation of which is the Qur'ān. It was brought down by Gabriel, the trustworthy and deliverd to Muḥammad (sws). 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās (rta) is of the view that the word شَاهِدٌ refers to Gabriel and I regard this to be correct. The difference between divine revelation, Qur'ān, Gabriel and messenger is only terminological. There is no difference between them with regard to God being the شَاهِدٌ. Thus this word is used in the Qur'ān for all these entities.

In وَ مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ كِتٰبُ مُوْسٰٓى اِمَامًا وَّ رَحْمَةً the words اِمَامًا and رَحْمَةً occur in the same way as هدى (guidance) and رحمة (mercy) occur at some other instances in the Qur'ān. Here اِمَامًا signifies هدى.

These two words: هدى (guidance) and رحمة (mercy) are actually used to refer to the beginning and the end. In other words, this Book is a guidance to the straight path in this world and a mercy in the hereafter who accept this guidance.

The sentence refers to the fact that among earlier testimonies the Book of Moses (sws) is also before them. It has similar teachings and in fact exists as a guide and mercy before hand with prophecies of the advent of the Qur'ān and its recipient: Muḥammad (sws).

Here a subtle indication also is worthy of note. Since the addressees of this *sūrah* are the Quraysh, one can think that the example of the Book of Moses (sws) cannot be an effective one. However, this notion is not correct. In the first place, the Quryash respected the People of the Book because of their knowledge and wisdon. Secondly, the Qur'ān here wants to refer to the Jews as well who should have taken the lead in accepting the Qur'ān since they were already the recipients of a Book of guidance and mercy. However, instead of taking the initiative, they were secretly conspiring to oppose it. Here, the Qur'an through a very subtle reference has directed their attention to the requisite of their status and position and that they should realize the doom they would encounter if they go against this requisite.

The words "only such people shall profess faith in it" emphasize the specific nature of their connotation. In other words, only those who have the aforementioned traits will believe in the Qur'ān. It is thus self-evident from this that those who are opposing the Qur'ān are without these traits. Because this deduction was obvious, it was not expressed in words.

The word اَحْزَاب has a little vastness in it. Through this word, the Qur'ān has pointed to some rather clandestine opponents (the People of the Book). Until that time they had not come to the fore. They were complementing the opponents (the Quraysh) who were standing right in the fore.

The words "therefore, do not be in any doubt about it because it is the truth from your Lord but most people do not believe in it" can be considered general. However, in my opinion, they refer to the Prophet (sws). However, the harshness and rebuke in them is directed at his opponents and they are not directly addressed because they are not worthy of it. For this reason, the Prophet (sws) is addressed but what is said is directed

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at them. This indirect rebuke at times is more effective. There are several powerful examples of this found in the Qur'ān. In other words, if these wretched people are denying this obvious reality, then the Prophet (sws) should not be perplexed. This is a truth and it is from their Lord but most people are not professing faith.

This topic is also discussed in verse 19 of Sūrah al-Ra'd. There I will explain it in more detail. Readers may look up what is written under verses 94-95.

وَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ يُعْرَضُوْنَ عَلٰى رَبِّهِمْ وَيَقُوْلُ الْاَشْهَادُ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ الَّذِيْنَ كَذَبُوْا عَلٰى رَبِّهِمْ ۚ اَلَا لَعْنَةُ اللّٰهِ عَلَى الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿۱۸﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يَصُدُّوْنَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَيَبْغُوْنَهَا عِوَجًا ؕ وَهُمْ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿۱۹﴾[15]

The topic discussed in these verses was also brought up in verses 17-18 of Sūrah Yūnus. It is mentioned there that the greatest reason behind the aversion of the Quraysh for the Qur'ān was because of its message of monotheism. They would fume with anger when they heard the condemnation of their deities. They would then utter against it whatever came to their mind. In the verse under discussion, the Qur'ān has expressed pity on their misfortune and deprivation keeping in view this real reason of their opposition: who can be more unjust than those who worshipped other deities and absolutely falsely claimed that God had made them their partners and had directed them to worship these deities. The reason it is the greatest misfortune is that this thing has become the reason for their eternal deprivation. This is because on the Day of Judgement, it will become evident that those whom they worshipped all their lives and on whose support they denied God's Book did not even exist and that they will have to solely face God.

The testimony mentioned in the part "the witnesses will bear witness that these are the ones who had fabricated a lie on God" could be of the messengers because it is mentioned in the Qur'ān that God will elicit the testimony of every messenger on the Day of Judgement on their nations; they will be asked what they taught and what distortion was created in these teachings by their people.

It is also possible that this is the testimony of the deities which were worshipped even though these deities never asked it nor did they ever got to know about it.

A third possibility is that this testimony is of the angels who keep the record of deeds of every person and on the Day of Judgement, this record will be brought before them.

The words "Listen! God's curse is on the unjust" form the declaration which will be made to the idolaters after this testimony is borne. This curse will then open the doors to all other hardships they will face.

The second verse "who stop [people] from the path of God and seek to distort it, and

15. And who can be more unjust than those who ascribe falsehood to God? They will be called before their Lord and the witnesses will bear witness that these are the ones who had fabricated a lie on God. Listen! God's curse is on the unjust who stop [people] from the path of God and seek to distort it, and it is they who deny the Hereafter.

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it is they who deny the Hereafter" mention some more traits of the unjust so that the whole discourse can now relate to the existing situation of that time and the two wrongdoings which made them worthy of this curse are also made known. The path which leads to God is straight and does not have any contortions or side-tracks in it. If a person treads this path, he can directly establish a relationship with his Lord but these wrongdoers have created many hindrances in this path. At every step, they have diverted it to various deities and their temples and altars and in this way side-tracked people from the real path of monotheism.

The style adopted in the expression "and it is they who deny the hereafter" has created an emphasis. In other words, it is they who are the actual rejecters of the hereafter. In the first instance, they tried to stop people from the path of God and this audacity was not possible without disregarding the hereafter. In the second, polytheism itself negates the hereafter. This is because this day has no use if the intercessors and partners of God will be able to save their worshippers whatever their beliefs and deeds may be. Belief in the hereafter is not just needed; it is essential to believe that it will provide unbiased justice to all and none will have a say before God on that day.

أُولٰٓئِكَ لَمْ يَكُوْنُوْا مُعْجِزِيْنَ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَ مَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مِنْ اَوْلِيَآءَ ۘ يُضٰعَفُ لَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ ۭ مَا كَانُوْا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ السَّمْعَ وَمَا كَانُوْا يُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾[16]

The verse implies that if God granted people respite in this world, it was not because they were beyond His grasp. They were actually given an opportunity to repent and reform themselves; if they do not do so, they will not be left with any excuse in being punished. Their claim that some of their deities and helpers will be able to save them from God's grasp on that day will also turn out to be baseless. Everything would be exposed to them there and these people will suffer their punishment. Since they not only withheld their own selves from the path of God but also stopped others from this path, they will suffer a two-fold punishment. These were the people who because of hate and aversion were not prepared to listen to the call of God and His messenger in the previous world nor did the infatuation with its pleasures did let them open their eyes to see the signs of God.

اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ خَسِرُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ لَا جَرَمَ اَنَّهُمْ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ هُمُ الْاَخْسَرُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾[17]

It is obvious that people who wasted their abilities in this way actually destroyed

16. They were not beyond God's grasp in the earth nor do they have any supporter except God. They will be given a two-fold torment. They could neither hear nor see.

17. It is they who have put themselves into a loss and what they had fabricated will be lost from them. It is these people who shall necessarily be in loss in the Hereafter.

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their own selves with their own hands. The support and help on the basis of which they undertook this dangerous move will not be of any avail to them. This is because all their deities will turn out to be baseless since they had actually fabricated them by imputing falsehood to God. It is obvious that failure in the hereafter will be the share of such people who are devoid of insight and intellect.

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَاَخْبَتُوْٓا اِلٰى رَبِّهِمْ ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ الْجَنَّةِ ۚ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾[18]

This verse mentions the fate of the believers in contrast to the fate of the disbelievers and the polytheists.

The expression "who bent before their Lord" means to devotedly turn to him in humility while disregarding others. Earlier, it was mentioned about the polytheists that were not prepared to open their eyes or ears because of conceit. However, these people adopted the path of faith and did righteous deeds and instead of stopping people from the straight path that leads to God and making them wander about threw themselves before Him in humility and devotion. The verse goes on to mention their reward.

مَثَلُ الْفَرِيْقَيْنِ كَالْاَعْمٰى وَالْاَصَمِّ وَالْبَصِيْرِ وَالسَّمِيْعِ ۭ هَلْ يَسْتَوِيٰنِ مَثَلًا ۭ اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾[19]

Earlier in verse 20, it was stated that the disbelievers have closed their eyes and ears and thus are unable to see the signs of God and listen to the Qur'ān. On the other hand, the believers have kept both their eyes and ears as open. The verse cites a parable and then says that how can the blind and deaf behave in the same way with the Qur'ān as those who have eyes and ears. The message of the Qur'ān is entirely based on intellect and insight. Only they will profess faith in it whose hearts and ears are open and who have preserved their innate abilities.

Section II: Verses (25-99)

In the succeeding verses, the anecdotes of the previous messengers and their nations are narrated in a chronological sequence. The purpose on the one hand it to show to the Prophet (sws) that what he was facing at that time was no different from what the previous messengers faced; he should seek guidance from their lives and just as they showed perseverance and diligence in encountering tough circumstances, he too should face the situation at hand. On the other hand, the purpose is to show to the Quraysh that the attitude they have adopted with their messenger is the same as the one adopted by

18. As for those who professed faith and did righteous deeds and who bent before their Lord, it is they who are the dwellers of Paradise. They shall abide in it forever.

19. The parable of both these groups is as if one is blind and deaf and one can see and hear. Will both be the same? Do you people not think?

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their predecessors with their respective messengers; as a result, they were destroyed after being given respite until a certain period of time; there is no reason that God will not deal with them in the same was as He did with the previous nations.

Readers may now proceed to study the verses.

Text and Translation

وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا نُوْحًا اِلٰى قَوْمِهٖٓ ۫ اِنِّيْ لَكُمْ نَذِيْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٢٥﴾ اَنْ لَّا تَعْبُدُوْٓا اِلَّا اللّٰهَ ۭ اِنِّيْٓ اَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ
يَوْمٍ اَلِيْمٍ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَقَالَ الْمَلَاُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ قَوْمِهٖ مَا نَرٰىكَ اِلَّا بَشَرًا مِّثْلَنَا وَمَا نَرٰىكَ اتَّبَعَكَ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ
اَرَاذِلُنَا بَادِيَ الرَّاْيِ ۚ وَمَا نَرٰى لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ فَضْلٍۭ بَلْ نَظُنُّكُمْ كٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اَرَءَيْتُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُ عَلٰى
بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّيْ وَاٰتٰىنِيْ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِهٖ فَعُمِّيَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ ۭ اَنُلْزِمُكُمُوْهَا وَاَنْتُمْ لَهَا كٰرِهُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَيٰقَوْمِ لَآ
اَسْـَٔـلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مَالًا ۭ اِنْ اَجْرِيَ اِلَّا عَلَي اللّٰهِ وَمَآ اَنَا بِطَارِدِ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ۭ اِنَّهُمْ مُّلٰقُوْا رَبِّهِمْ وَلٰكِنِّيْٓ اَرٰىكُمْ
قَوْمًا تَجْهَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَيٰقَوْمِ مَنْ يَّنْصُرُنِيْ مِنَ اللّٰهِ اِنْ طَرَدْتُّهُمْ ۭ اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَلَآ اَقُوْلُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِيْ
خَزَاۗىِٕنُ اللّٰهِ وَلَآ اَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلَآ اَقُوْلُ اِنِّيْ مَلَكٌ وَّلَآ اَقُوْلُ لِلَّذِيْنَ تَزْدَرِيْٓ اَعْيُنُكُمْ لَنْ يُّؤْتِيَهُمُ اللّٰهُ خَيْرًا ۭ
اَللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِيْٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ ۚ اِنِّىْٓ اِذًا لَّمِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ قَالُوْا يٰنُوْحُ قَدْ جٰدَلْتَنَا فَاَكْثَرْتَ جِدَالَنَا فَاْتِنَا بِمَا
تَعِدُنَآ اِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ قَالَ اِنَّمَا يَاْتِيْكُمْ بِهِ اللّٰهُ اِنْ شَاۗءَ وَمَآ اَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِيْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَا يَنْفَعُكُمْ
نُصْحِيْٓ اِنْ اَرَدْتُّ اَنْ اَنْصَحَ لَكُمْ اِنْ كَانَ اللّٰهُ يُرِيْدُ اَنْ يُّغْوِيَكُمْ ۭ هُوَ رَبُّكُمْ ۣ وَاِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ اَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ
افْتَرٰىهُ ۭ قُلْ اِنِ افْتَرَيْتُهٗ فَعَلَيَّ اِجْرَامِيْ وَاَنَا بَرِيْۗءٌ مِّمَّا تُجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَاُوْحِيَ اِلٰى نُوْحٍ اَنَّهٗ لَنْ يُّؤْمِنَ مِنْ
قَوْمِكَ اِلَّا مَنْ قَدْ اٰمَنَ فَلَا تَبْتَىِٕسْ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَاصْنَعِ الْفُلْكَ بِاَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحْيِنَا وَلَا تُخَاطِبْنِيْ
فِي الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا ۚ اِنَّهُمْ مُّغْرَقُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَيَصْنَعُ الْفُلْكَ ۣ وَكُلَّمَا مَرَّ عَلَيْهِ مَلَاٌ مِّنْ قَوْمِهٖ سَخِرُوْا مِنْهُ ۭ قَالَ اِنْ
تَسْخَرُوْا مِنَّا فَاِنَّا نَسْخَرُ مِنْكُمْ كَمَا تَسْخَرُوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۙ مَنْ يَّاْتِيْهِ عَذَابٌ يُّخْزِيْهِ وَيَحِلُّ عَلَيْهِ
عَذَابٌ مُّقِيْمٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا جَاۗءَ اَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ التَّنُّوْرُ ۙ قُلْنَا احْمِلْ فِيْهَا مِنْ كُلٍّ زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَاَهْلَكَ اِلَّا مَنْ
سَبَقَ عَلَيْهِ الْقَوْلُ وَمَنْ اٰمَنَ ۭ وَمَآ اٰمَنَ مَعَهٗٓ اِلَّا قَلِيْلٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَقَالَ ارْكَبُوْا فِيْهَا بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ مَجْرٖىهَا وَ
مُرْسٰىهَا ۭ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ لَغَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٤١﴾ وَهِيَ تَجْرِيْ بِهِمْ فِيْ مَوْجٍ كَالْجِبَالِ ۡ وَنَادٰى نُوْحُۨ ابْنَهٗ وَكَانَ فِيْ مَعْزِلٍ يّٰبُنَيَّ
ارْكَبْ مَّعَنَا وَلَا تَكُنْ مَّعَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ قَالَ سَاٰوِيْٓ اِلٰى جَبَلٍ يَّعْصِمُنِيْ مِنَ الْمَاۗءِ ۭ قَالَ لَا عَاصِمَ الْيَوْمَ مِنْ

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اَمۡرِ اللّٰهِ اِلَّا مَنۡ رَّحِمَ ۚ وَحَالَ بَيۡنَهُمَا الۡمَوۡجُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الۡمُغۡرَقِيۡنَ ﴿۴۳﴾ وَقِيۡلَ يٰۤاَرۡضُ ابۡلَعِىۡ مَآءَكِ وَيٰسَمَآءُ
اَقۡلِعِىۡ وَغِيۡضَ الۡمَآءُ وَقُضِىَ الۡاَمۡرُ وَاسۡتَوَتۡ عَلَى الۡجُوۡدِىِّ وَقِيۡلَ بُعۡدًا لِّلۡقَوۡمِ الظّٰلِمِيۡنَ ﴿۴۴﴾ وَنَادٰى نُوۡحٌ رَّبَّهٗ
فَقَالَ رَبِّ اِنَّ ابۡنِىۡ مِنۡ اَهۡلِىۡ وَاِنَّ وَعۡدَكَ الۡحَقُّ وَاَنۡتَ اَحۡكَمُ الۡحٰكِمِيۡنَ ﴿۴۵﴾ قَالَ يٰنُوۡحُ اِنَّهٗ لَيۡسَ مِنۡ اَهۡلِكَ ۚ
اِنَّهٗ عَمَلٌ غَيۡرُ صَالِحٍ ۖ فَلَا تَسۡـَٔلۡنِ مَا لَيۡسَ لَكَ بِهٖ عِلۡمٌ ؕ اِنِّىۡۤ اَعِظُكَ اَنۡ تَكُوۡنَ مِنَ الۡجٰهِلِيۡنَ ﴿۴۶﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اِنِّۡۤ
اَعُوۡذُ بِكَ اَنۡ اَسۡـَٔلَكَ مَا لَيۡسَ لِىۡ بِهٖ عِلۡمٌ ؕ وَاِلَّا تَغۡفِرۡ لِىۡ وَتَرۡحَمۡنِىۡۤ اَكُنۡ مِّنَ الۡخٰسِرِيۡنَ ﴿۴۷﴾ قِيۡلَ يٰنُوۡحُ اهۡبِطۡ
بِسَلٰمٍ مِّنَّا وَبَرَكٰتٍ عَلَيۡكَ وَعَلٰۤى اُمَمٍ مِّمَّنۡ مَّعَكَ ؕ وَاُمَمٌ سَنُمَتِّعُهُمۡ ثُمَّ يَمَسُّهُمۡ مِّنَّا عَذَابٌ اَلِيۡمٌ ﴿۴۸﴾ تِلۡكَ
مِنۡ اَنۡۢبَآءِ الۡغَيۡبِ نُوۡحِيۡهَاۤ اِلَيۡكَ ۚ مَا كُنۡتَ تَعۡلَمُهَاۤ اَنۡتَ وَلَا قَوۡمُكَ مِنۡ قَبۡلِ هٰذَا ۛؕ فَاصۡبِرۡ ؕ اِنَّ الۡعَاقِبَةَ
لِلۡمُتَّقِيۡنَ ﴿۴۹﴾ وَاِلٰى عَادٍ اَخَاهُمۡ هُوۡدًا ؕ قَالَ يٰقَوۡمِ اعۡبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمۡ مِّنۡ اِلٰهٍ غَيۡرُهٗ ؕ اِنۡ اَنۡتُمۡ اِلَّا مُفۡتَرُوۡنَ
﴿۵۰﴾ يٰقَوۡمِ لَاۤ اَسۡـَٔلُكُمۡ عَلَيۡهِ اَجۡرًا ؕ اِنۡ اَجۡرِىَ اِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِىۡ فَطَرَنِىۡ ؕ اَفَلَا تَعۡقِلُوۡنَ ﴿۵۱﴾ وَيٰقَوۡمِ اسۡتَغۡفِرُوۡا رَبَّكُمۡ
ثُمَّ تُوۡبُوۡۤا اِلَيۡهِ يُرۡسِلِ السَّمَآءَ عَلَيۡكُمۡ مِّدۡرَارًا وَّيَزِدۡكُمۡ قُوَّةً اِلٰى قُوَّتِكُمۡ وَلَا تَتَوَلَّوۡا مُجۡرِمِيۡنَ ﴿۵۲﴾ قَالُوۡا يٰهُوۡدُ مَا
جِئۡتَنَا بِبَيِّنَةٍ وَّمَا نَحۡنُ بِتَارِكِىۡۤ اٰلِهَتِنَا عَنۡ قَوۡلِكَ وَمَا نَحۡنُ لَكَ بِمُؤۡمِنِيۡنَ ﴿۵۳﴾ اِنۡ نَّقُوۡلُ اِلَّا اعۡتَرٰىكَ بَعۡضُ
اٰلِهَتِنَا بِسُوۡٓءٍ ؕ قَالَ اِنِّىۡۤ اُشۡهِدُ اللّٰهَ وَاشۡهَدُوۡۤا اَنِّىۡ بَرِىۡٓءٌ مِّمَّا تُشۡرِكُوۡنَ ﴿۵۴﴾ مِنۡ دُوۡنِهٖ فَكِيۡدُوۡنِىۡ جَمِيۡعًا ثُمَّ لَا
تُنۡظِرُوۡنِ ﴿۵۵﴾ اِنِّىۡ تَوَكَّلۡتُ عَلَى اللّٰهِ رَبِّىۡ وَرَبِّكُمۡ ؕ مَا مِنۡ دَآبَّةٍ اِلَّا هُوَ اٰخِذٌ بِنَاصِيَتِهَا ؕ اِنَّ رَبِّىۡ عَلٰى صِرَاطٍ
مُّسۡتَقِيۡمٍ ﴿۵۶﴾ فَاِنۡ تَوَلَّوۡا فَقَدۡ اَبۡلَغۡتُكُمۡ مَّاۤ اُرۡسِلۡتُ بِهٖۤ اِلَيۡكُمۡ ؕ وَيَسۡتَخۡلِفُ رَبِّىۡ قَوۡمًا غَيۡرَكُمۡ ۚ وَلَا تَضُرُّوۡنَهٗ
شَيۡـًٔا ؕ اِنَّ رَبِّىۡ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىۡءٍ حَفِيۡظٌ ﴿۵۷﴾ وَلَمَّا جَآءَ اَمۡرُنَا نَجَّيۡنَا هُوۡدًا وَّالَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا مَعَهٗ بِرَحۡمَةٍ مِّنَّا ۚ وَ
نَجَّيۡنٰهُمۡ مِّنۡ عَذَابٍ غَلِيۡظٍ ﴿۵۸﴾ وَتِلۡكَ عَادٌ ۖ جَحَدُوۡا بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهِمۡ وَعَصَوۡا رُسُلَهٗ وَاتَّبَعُوۡۤا اَمۡرَ كُلِّ جَبَّارٍ عَنِيۡدٍ
﴿۵۹﴾ وَاُتۡبِعُوۡا فِىۡ هٰذِهِ الدُّنۡيَا لَعۡنَةً وَّيَوۡمَ الۡقِيٰمَةِ ؕ اَلَاۤ اِنَّ عَادًا كَفَرُوۡا رَبَّهُمۡ ؕ اَلَا بُعۡدًا لِّعَادٍ قَوۡمِ هُوۡدٍ ﴿۶۰﴾ وَاِلٰى
ثَمُوۡدَ اَخَاهُمۡ صٰلِحًا ؕ قَالَ يٰقَوۡمِ اعۡبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمۡ مِّنۡ اِلٰهٍ غَيۡرُهٗ ؕ هُوَ اَنۡشَاَكُمۡ مِّنَ الۡاَرۡضِ وَاسۡتَعۡمَرَكُمۡ فِيۡهَا
فَاسۡتَغۡفِرُوۡهُ ثُمَّ تُوۡبُوۡۤا اِلَيۡهِ ؕ اِنَّ رَبِّىۡ قَرِيۡبٌ مُّجِيۡبٌ ﴿۶۱﴾ قَالُوۡا يٰصٰلِحُ قَدۡ كُنۡتَ فِيۡنَا مَرۡجُوًّا قَبۡلَ هٰذَاۤ اَتَنۡهٰٮنَاۤ
اَنۡ نَّعۡبُدَ مَا يَعۡبُدُ اٰبَآؤُنَا وَاِنَّنَا لَفِىۡ شَكٍّ مِّمَّا تَدۡعُوۡنَاۤ اِلَيۡهِ مُرِيۡبٍ ﴿۶۲﴾ قَالَ يٰقَوۡمِ اَرَءَيۡتُمۡ اِنۡ كُنۡتُ عَلٰى بَيِّنَةٍ
مِّنۡ رَّبِّىۡ وَاٰتٰىنِىۡ مِنۡهُ رَحۡمَةً فَمَنۡ يَّنۡصُرُنِىۡ مِنَ اللّٰهِ اِنۡ عَصَيۡتُهٗ ۫ فَمَا تَزِيۡدُوۡنَنِىۡ غَيۡرَ تَخۡسِيۡرٍ ﴿۶۳﴾ وَيٰقَوۡمِ هٰذِهٖ

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نَاقَةُ اللّٰهِ لَكُمْ اٰيَةً فَذَرُوْهَا تَاْكُلْ فِيْٓ اَرْضِ اللّٰهِ وَلَا تَمَسُّوْهَا بِسُوْٓءٍ فَيَاْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابٌ قَرِيْبٌ ﴿٦٤﴾ فَعَقَرُوْهَا فَقَالَ
تَمَتَّعُوْا فِيْ دَارِكُمْ ثَلٰثَةَ اَيَّامٍ ؕ ذٰلِكَ وَعْدٌ غَيْرُ مَكْذُوْبٍ ﴿٦٥﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَ اَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا صٰلِحًا وَّالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مَعَهٗ
بِرَحْمَةٍ مِّنَّا وَمِنْ خِزْيِ يَوْمِئِذٍ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ الْقَوِيُّ الْعَزِيْزُ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَاَخَذَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةُ فَاَصْبَحُوْا فِيْ
دِيَارِهِمْ جٰثِمِيْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ كَاَنْ لَّمْ يَغْنَوْا فِيْهَا ؕ اَلَآ اِنَّ ثَمُوْدَا كَفَرُوْا رَبَّهُمْ ؕ اَلَا بُعْدًا لِّثَمُوْدَ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَلَقَدْ جَآءَتْ رُسُلُنَآ
اِبْرٰهِيْمَ بِالْبُشْرٰى قَالُوْا سَلٰمًا ؕ قَالَ سَلٰمٌ فَمَا لَبِثَ اَنْ جَآءَ بِعِجْلٍ حَنِيْذٍ ﴿٦٩﴾ فَلَمَّا رَآٰ اَيْدِيَهُمْ لَا تَصِلُ اِلَيْهِ
نَكِرَهُمْ وَاَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيْفَةً ؕ قَالُوْا لَا تَخَفْ اِنَّآ اُرْسِلْنَآ اِلٰى قَوْمِ لُوْطٍ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَامْرَاَتُهٗ قَآئِمَةٌ فَضَحِكَتْ
فَبَشَّرْنٰهَا بِاِسْحٰقَ ۙ وَمِنْ وَّرَآءِ اِسْحٰقَ يَعْقُوْبَ ﴿٧١﴾ قَالَتْ يٰوَيْلَتٰى ءَاَلِدُ وَاَنَا عَجُوْزٌ وَّهٰذَا بَعْلِيْ شَيْخًا ؕ اِنَّ هٰذَا
لَشَيْءٌ عَجِيْبٌ ﴿٧٢﴾ قَالُوْٓا اَتَعْجَبِيْنَ مِنْ اَمْرِ اللّٰهِ رَحْمَتُ اللّٰهِ وَبَرَكٰتُهٗ عَلَيْكُمْ اَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ ؕ اِنَّهٗ حَمِيْدٌ مَّجِيْدٌ
﴿٧٣﴾ فَلَمَّا ذَهَبَ عَنْ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ الرَّوْعُ وَجَآءَتْهُ الْبُشْرٰى يُجَادِلُنَا فِيْ قَوْمِ لُوْطٍ ﴿٧٤﴾ اِنَّ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ لَحَلِيْمٌ اَوَّاهٌ مُّنِيْبٌ
﴿٧٥﴾ يٰٓاِبْرٰهِيْمُ اَعْرِضْ عَنْ هٰذَا ۚ اِنَّهٗ قَدْ جَآءَ اَمْرُ رَبِّكَ ۚ وَاِنَّهُمْ اٰتِيْهِمْ عَذَابٌ غَيْرُ مَرْدُوْدٍ ﴿٧٦﴾ وَلَمَّا جَآءَتْ
رُسُلُنَا لُوْطًا سِيْٓءَ بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ ذَرْعًا وَّقَالَ هٰذَا يَوْمٌ عَصِيْبٌ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَجَآءَهٗ قَوْمُهٗ يُهْرَعُوْنَ اِلَيْهِ ؕ وَمِنْ قَبْلُ
كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ السَّيِّاٰتِ ؕ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ بَنَاتِيْ هُنَّ اَطْهَرُ لَكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَلَا تُخْزُوْنِ فِيْ ضَيْفِيْ ؕ اَلَيْسَ
مِنْكُمْ رَجُلٌ رَّشِيْدٌ ﴿٧٨﴾ قَالُوْا لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا لَنَا فِيْ بَنٰتِكَ مِنْ حَقٍّ ۚ وَاِنَّكَ لَتَعْلَمُ مَا نُرِيْدُ ﴿٧٩﴾ قَالَ لَوْ اَنَّ لِيْ
بِكُمْ قُوَّةً اَوْ اٰوِيْٓ اِلٰى رُكْنٍ شَدِيْدٍ ﴿٨٠﴾ قَالُوْا يٰلُوْطُ اِنَّا رُسُلُ رَبِّكَ لَنْ يَّصِلُوْٓا اِلَيْكَ فَاَسْرِ بِاَهْلِكَ بِقِطْعٍ مِّنَ الَّيْلِ
وَلَا يَلْتَفِتْ مِنْكُمْ اَحَدٌ اِلَّا امْرَاَتَكَ ؕ اِنَّهٗ مُصِيْبُهَا مَآ اَصَابَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّ مَوْعِدَهُمُ الصُّبْحُ ؕ اَلَيْسَ الصُّبْحُ
بِقَرِيْبٍ ﴿٨١﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَ اَمْرُنَا جَعَلْنَا عَالِيَهَا سَافِلَهَا وَاَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا حِجَارَةً مِّنْ سِجِّيْلٍ ۙ مَّنْضُوْدٍ ﴿٨٢﴾
مُّسَوَّمَةً عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ؕ وَمَا هِيَ مِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ بِبَعِيْدٍ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَاِلٰى مَدْيَنَ اَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا ؕ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ
مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ اِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهٗ ؕ وَلَا تَنْقُصُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيْزَانَ اِنِّيْٓ اَرٰىكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ وَّاِنِّيْٓ اَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ مُّحِيْطٍ
﴿٨٤﴾ وَيٰقَوْمِ اَوْفُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيْزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ اَشْيَآءَهُمْ وَلَا تَعْثَوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ مُفْسِدِيْنَ
﴿٨٥﴾ بَقِيَّتُ اللّٰهِ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ۚ وَمَآ اَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيْظٍ ﴿٨٦﴾ قَالُوْا يٰشُعَيْبُ اَصَلٰوتُكَ تَاْمُرُكَ
اَنْ نَّتْرُكَ مَا يَعْبُدُ اٰبَآؤُنَآ اَوْ اَنْ نَّفْعَلَ فِيْٓ اَمْوَالِنَا مَا نَشٰٓؤُا ؕ اِنَّكَ لَاَنْتَ الْحَلِيْمُ الرَّشِيْدُ ﴿٨٧﴾ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اَرَءَيْتُمْ

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اِنۡ كُنۡتُ عَلٰى بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنۡ رَّبِّىۡ وَرَزَقَنِىۡ مِنۡهُ رِزۡقًا حَسَنًا ؕ وَمَاۤ اُرِيۡدُ اَنۡ اُخَالِفَكُمۡ اِلٰى مَاۤ اَنۡهٰىكُمۡ عَنۡهُ ؕ اِنۡ اُرِيۡدُ اِلَّا
الۡاِصۡلَاحَ مَا اسۡتَطَعۡتُ ؕ وَمَا تَوۡفِيۡقِىۡۤ اِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ ؕ عَلَيۡهِ تَوَكَّلۡتُ وَاِلَيۡهِ اُنِيۡبُ ﴿۸۸﴾ وَيٰقَوۡمِ لَا يَجۡرِمَنَّكُمۡ شِقَاقِىۡۤ اَنۡ
يُّصِيۡبَكُمۡ مِّثۡلُ مَاۤ اَصَابَ قَوۡمَ نُوۡحٍ اَوۡ قَوۡمَ هُوۡدٍ اَوۡ قَوۡمَ صٰلِحٍ ؕ وَمَا قَوۡمُ لُوۡطٍ مِّنۡكُمۡ بِبَعِيۡدٍ ﴿۸۹﴾ وَاسۡتَغۡفِرُوۡا
رَبَّكُمۡ ثُمَّ تُوۡبُوۡۤا اِلَيۡهِ ؕ اِنَّ رَبِّىۡ رَحِيۡمٌ وَّدُوۡدٌ ﴿۹۰﴾ قَالُوۡا يٰشُعَيۡبُ مَا نَفۡقَهُ كَثِيۡرًا مِّمَّا تَقُوۡلُ وَاِنَّا لَنَرٰىكَ فِيۡنَا
ضَعِيۡفًا ۚ وَلَوۡلَا رَهۡطُكَ لَرَجَمۡنٰكَ ۖ وَمَاۤ اَنۡتَ عَلَيۡنَا بِعَزِيۡزٍ ﴿۹۱﴾ قَالَ يٰقَوۡمِ اَرَهۡطِىۡۤ اَعَزُّ عَلَيۡكُمۡ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَ
اتَّخَذۡتُمُوۡهُ وَرَآءَكُمۡ ظِهۡرِيًّا ؕ اِنَّ رَبِّىۡ بِمَا تَعۡمَلُوۡنَ مُحِيۡطٌ ﴿۹۲﴾ وَيٰقَوۡمِ اعۡمَلُوۡا عَلٰى مَكَانَتِكُمۡ اِنِّىۡ عَامِلٌ ؕ سَوۡفَ
تَعۡلَمُوۡنَ ۙ مَنۡ يَّاۡتِيۡهِ عَذَابٌ يُّخۡزِيۡهِ وَمَنۡ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ ؕ وَارۡتَقِبُوۡۤا اِنِّىۡ مَعَكُمۡ رَقِيۡبٌ ﴿۹۳﴾ وَلَمَّا جَآءَ اَمۡرُنَا نَجَّيۡنَا
شُعَيۡبًا وَّالَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا مَعَهٗ بِرَحۡمَةٍ مِّنَّا وَاَخَذَتِ الَّذِيۡنَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيۡحَةُ فَاَصۡبَحُوۡا فِىۡ دِيَارِهِمۡ جٰثِمِيۡنَ ﴿۹۴﴾
كَاَنۡ لَّمۡ يَغۡنَوۡا فِيۡهَا ؕ اَلَا بُعۡدًا لِّمَدۡيَنَ كَمَا بَعِدَتۡ ثَمُوۡدُ ﴿۹۵﴾ وَلَقَدۡ اَرۡسَلۡنَا مُوۡسٰى بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَسُلۡطٰنٍ مُّبِيۡنٍ ﴿۹۶﴾
اِلٰى فِرۡعَوۡنَ وَمَلَا۟ئِهٖ فَاتَّبَعُوۡۤا اَمۡرَ فِرۡعَوۡنَ ۚ وَمَاۤ اَمۡرُ فِرۡعَوۡنَ بِرَشِيۡدٍ ﴿۹۷﴾ يَقۡدُمُ قَوۡمَهٗ يَوۡمَ الۡقِيٰمَةِ فَاَوۡرَدَهُمُ
النَّارَ ؕ وَبِئۡسَ الۡوِرۡدُ الۡمَوۡرُوۡدُ ﴿۹۸﴾ وَاُتۡبِعُوۡا فِىۡ هٰذِهٖ لَعۡنَةً وَّيَوۡمَ الۡقِيٰمَةِ ؕ بِئۡسَ الرِّفۡدُ الۡمَرۡفُوۡدُ ﴿۹۹﴾

And We sent Noah as a messenger to his nation. He informed them: "I have come as an open warner for you that worship no one but God. I fear for you the torment of a painful day." The chiefs of his nation who had disbelieved said: "We consider you as a person only like us and we only see the lowliest among us blindly following you. And We also do not see that you have any special distinction in contrast to us. In fact, we regard you as a blatant liar." (25-27)

He said: "O People of My Nation! Just think that if I am on a clear argument from my Lord and then He also blessed me with His special mercy and it remained hidden from you; so, should we stick it on you when you are also averse to it? And O People of My Nation! I do not ask for any wealth from you for this service. My reward rests with God only and I am never going disregard those who have accepted faith. They will be meeting their Lord. In fact, I see that you are inflicted with ignorance. And O People of My Nation! Who will help me against God if I disregard them? Do you people not pay attention to this aspect? And I do not claim before you that I have the treasures of God. Nor do I have the knowledge of the Unseen. I also do not claim to be an angel. And I cannot say about those whom your eyes see as inferior that God cannot even bless them with any good. God alone better knows whatever is in their hearts. If I do this, it is I who would be unjust. They said: "Noah! You have argued with us and argued a lot. So, if you are truthful, bring forth on us that which you are continuously threatening us with." He replied: "Only God will bring it forth on you if He desires

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and you shall not be able to escape His grasp. And even if I want to be your well-wisher, my well-wishing can be of no use to you if God wants to lead you astray. He alone is your Lord and to Him you have to return. (28-34)

Do they say: "He has concocted it?" Say: If I have concocted it myself, then the evil consequence of my crime will come to me and I am acquitted from whatever you are doing. (35)

And it was revealed to Noah that no others among your nation will accept faith except the ones who already have. So, grieve not at their misdeeds and make a ship under Our supervision and according to Our guidance. And do not say anything to Me about these unjust people. They are now destined to drown. And he began making the ship. And whenever a group of elders of his nation passed by him, they would make fun of him. He would reply to them: "If you make fun of us, then just as you make fun, we shall also make fun of you. Then you will soon know the ones who are visited by that torment which humiliates them and that scourge descends which stays stationed." Until when Our directive arrived and the storm erupted, We said to him: "Place in the ship both male and female from every species and make your family board this ship except for those about whom the directive has been implemented and [make those board also] who have accepted faith. And few were the ones who had professed faith with him." Noah said: "Embark on it; its sailing and setting anchor is with the name of God alone. My Lord is very Forgiving, Ever-Merciful." (36-41)

And that ship began to take them between waves as high as mountains and Noah called upon his son who was away from this: "Son! Embark with us and do not side with these disbelievers." He replied: "I shall presently take refuge in some mountain that will save me from this water." Noah said: "There is no one to save today from God's wrath except to whom He shows mercy." And a wave came between the two and he was also among those drowned. And it was ordered: "O Earth! Swallow up your water and cease O Sky!" And the water was brought down and the matter was decided. And the ship came to rest at the mount of Jūdī and it was proclaimed: "May the curse of God be on the unjust." And Noah called on his Lord and said: "O my God! My son is from my family and true is Your promise and among the judges you are the greatest." God said: "Noah! He is not from your family. He is an utter wretch. Do not request from me about which you have no knowledge at all. And I urge you to not be among those who are overwhelmed by emotions." He said: "Lord! I seek refuge with You from asking you for something of which I have no knowledge. And if you do not forgive me and not have mercy on me, I shall be among the losers." God said: "Disembark Noah with Our peace and blessings, upon you and also upon those communities which will come into being from those with you." And there will be some communities which We shall provide for; then a painful torment from Us will seize them. (42-48)

This account is from among the news of the Unseen which We are narrating to you through revelation. Neither you knew it before this nor did the people of your nation. So, remain steadfast. The ultimate triumph is for those who fear God. (49)

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And to ‘Ād We sent their brother Hūd as a messenger. He invited them: “People of My Nation! Worship God only. No one else is your God. You are fabricating mere falsehoods. O People of My Nation! I do not demand any reward from you on this. My reward is with He Who created me. Then do you not understand? And O People of My Nation! Seek forgiveness from your Lord. Then turn to Him. He will pour down abundant rain on you and increase your strength further and do not show criminal evasion.” They replied: “O Hūd! You have not brought any clear sign to us and we are not leaving our deities merely at your bidding and we shall never believe in you. We shall only say that you have been afflicted with a punishment from one of our deities.” He said: “I make God a witness and you also be a witness that I am totally acquitted from those whom you associate with God. So, all of you may scheme against me; then do not give me the slightest respite. I have put my trust in God – in my and your Lord. The forehead of every living being is in His hands. Indeed, my Lord is on a very straight path. Thus if you are paying no heed, then I have delivered the message with which I have been sent to you. And my Lord will bring some other nation in your place and you will not be able to harm Him in any way. My Lord watches over everything.” And when Our punishment arrived, We delivered with Our special grace Hūd and those who had believed with him. And We saved them from a very harsh torment. (50-58)

And this was the nation of ‘Ād. They rejected the revelations of their Lord, disobeyed His messengers and followed the way of every tyrant and defiant person. And a curse was made to follow them in this world and on the Day of Judgement too. Listen! The ‘Ād denied their Lord. Listen! The ‘Ād, people of Hūd’s nation be accursed. (59-60)

And to the Thamūd, We sent their brother Ṣāliḥ as a messenger. He invited them: “O People of My Nation! Worship God, there is for you no god except Him. It is He Who has raised you from the earth and made you populate it. So, seek forgiveness from Him; then turn to Him. My Lord is near and also one who acknowledges.” They replied: “Ṣāliḥ! Before this, a lot of hope was pinned in you among us. Do you stop us from the worship of the deities that have been worshipped by our forefathers? And we are in a great perplexity because of that which you are calling us to.” He said: “People of My Nation! Reflect a little that if I am on a clear proof from my Lord and He has also granted me a special grace from Himself, then who will help me at the time of God’s grasp if I disobey Him? So, you will only increase in ruining me. (61-63)

And People of My Nation! This is God’s she-camel as a sign for you. Thus leave it that it may graze in the land of God and do not harm it, otherwise a torment will soon visit you.” Then they hamstrung her. At this, he said: “Thrive now in this settlement of yours for three more days; this warning is not going to be a false one.” Thus when Our directive was given, We delivered with Our special grace Ṣāliḥ and those who professed belief with him from that torment and from the humiliation of that day. Indeed, your Lord alone is Powerful and Mighty. And a violent roar overtook those who were unjust and they were left clinging to the ground face down in their houses as if they never lived in them. Listen! The Thamūd were ungrateful to their Lord.

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Listen! The Thamūd be cursed. (64-68)

And Our angels had come to Abraham with a glad tiding. They said: "Peace." He also replied: "Peace." Not much time elapsed when he brought to them a roasted calf. Then when he saw that their hands were not reaching towards it, he found some peculiarity in them and felt a little fear. They said: "Fear not. We have been sent towards the people of Lot." And his wife was standing nearby. She laughed. Thus We gave her glad tidings of Isaac and after Isaac, Jacob. She said: "Alas! Will I now beget a child when I myself am old and this husband of mine has also grown old? This would be a very strange thing." The angels replied: "Do you express wonder on God's words? Family of Abraham! May God's mercy and blessings be on you. Indeed, God has all praiseworthy attributes and is exalted." (69-73)

So, when Abraham calmed down him and he received glad tidings, He began arguing with Us about the nation of Lot. Indeed, Abraham was very gracious and very caring and one who was focused towards his Lord. Abraham! Leave aside this debate. The directive of your Lord has now been issued and that torment is going to visit them which cannot be warded off. And when Our angels came to Lot, he was very sad because of them and was heart-wrenched and said: "This is a very harsh day." (74-77)

And the people of his nation came leaping towards him and they were already engaged in vulgarities. He said: "O People of My Nation! These are my daughters. They are purer for you. So, fear God and do not humiliate me in the matter of my guests. Is there no sensible person among you?" They replied: "You do know that we have no right over your daughters and you well know what we desire." He said: "Would that I had the power to combat you or I could take refuge with a strong support." The angels said: "Lot! We have been sent by your Lord; they will never be able to come near you. So, leave with your family in the last part of the night and none of you should look back. However, your wife is an exception; she too is going to be visited by the calamity that has been destined for these people. The time of morning is fixed for their punishment. Is not the morning near? (77-81)

Thus when Our punishment arrived, We overturned that settlement forthwith and rained down on it layered stones of hard clay which were marked from your Lord. And they were not very far away from these unjust people. (82-83)

And towards Madyan, We sent their brother Shu'ayb. He invited [them]: "O People of My Nation! Worship God. You do not have any deity except Him and do not weigh and measure less. I see you in prosperity and fear for you the torment of the day which will surround you. And O People of My Nation! Weigh and measure with full fairness and do not be dishonest in the things of people and do not go about spreading disorder in the land. Only the profit given by God is better for you if you are true believers. And I have not been deputed as a keeper on you." They said: "O Shu'ayb! Does your prayer teach you that we leave those which our forefathers used to worship or we should not use our wealth the way we want to? Are you the only wise and upright

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person left?" He said: "O People of My Nation! Just think that if I am on clear evidence from my Lord and He has also provided me with a goodly sustenance from Himself; [so what except this should I invite to?] And, by opposing you, I myself do not want to adopt what I am stopping you from. I only want to set right affairs as much as I can. And I shall receive its urge with God's help only. I have trusted Him alone and I turn to Him only. And O People of My Nation! Your stubbornness against me may become a cause of you being also visited by the calamity which visited the people of Noah or the people of Hūd or the people of Ṣāliḥ and the people of Lot are also not far away from you. And seek forgiveness from your Lord; then turn towards Him only. Indeed, my Lord is extremely Merciful and very Loving." They said: "O Shu'ayb! We do not understand much of what you say and we see that you are a weak individual among us. But for your clan, we would have stoned you to death. And you are not the slightest powerful for us." He said: "My Nation! Is my clan more powerful to you than God? And you have forgotten Him. Whatever you are doing is encompassed by my Lord. And O People of My Nation! Continue doing whatever you are doing; so will I. Soon you will know who is visited by a punishment that humiliates him and who is a liar. And wait! I am also waiting with you." And when Our punishment arrived, We delivered with Our grace Shu'ayb and those who had accepted faith with him, and those who had been unjust to their souls were struck by a roar. Thus they were left lying face down in their houses, as if they never lived there. Listen! The people of Madyan were destroyed the way the Thamūd were. (84-95)

And We sent Moses to the Pharaoh and his chiefs with Our signs and a clear proof; then they obeyed what the Pharaoh said even though what he said was not correct. On the Day of Judgement, he will be in front of his people and will lead them to Hell. And what an evil place it will be in which they descend. And a curse has been made to follow them in this world and also in the Hereafter. What an evil reward were they given! (96-99)

Explanation

وَلَقَدۡ اَرۡسَلۡنَا نُوۡحًا اِلٰی قَوۡمِہٖۤ اِنِّیۡ لَکُمۡ نَذِیۡرٌ مُّبِیۡنٌ ۙ﴿۲۵﴾[20]

The anecdote of Noah (sws) has also been referred to in verses 71-73 of the previous *sūrah.* In this *sūrah*, it is discussed in much more detail.

The expression نَذِیۡرٌ مُّبِیۡنٌ (open warner) refers to the fact that the punishment which a messenger warns his nation is not based on speculation and conjecture; it is a well-founded and well-grounded. This is because in the first instance it is based on divine revelation. In the second, it is also the requisite of an established practice of God which necessarily manifests itself if His messenger is denied. Quite naturally, this certainty

20. And We sent Noah as a messenger to his nation. He informed them: "I have come as an open warner for you"

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also influences the speech and tone of a messenger. Here readers may keep in mind a subtle reference in the expression نَذِيْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ. It was a tradition among the Arabs that they would construct turrets on every high hillock or hill in which a guard would always sit. His job would be to tear his clothes, strip naked and shout واصباحا when some enemy would advance to attack his people. This was an alarm for the whole nation and they would unsheathe their swords and come out. That person would be called "a naked warner." Messengers of God also came to warn their people about a torment and they informed people in the same manner as if it is about to descend from behind. For this reason, the Qur'ān has used the words نَذِيْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ for these messengers.

اَنْ لَّا تَعْبُدُوْٓا اِلَّا اللّٰهَ ؕ اِنِّيْٓ اَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ اَلِيْمٍ ﴿۲۶﴾ [21]

These are the initial words of the message delivered by Noah (sws). Earlier in verse 3, precisely in the same manner the Prophet (sws) began his preaching. Furthermore, the way Noah's people debated and disputed with him was similar to the one faced by the Prophet (sws). It is this correspondence of events and incidents for which these anecdotes are being narrated. Thus, in the light of these past events, this would bring the whole map of the present and future before the eyes of the Prophet (sws) and his companions. This is the real significance of history. If this aspect does not remain in consideration, history merely becomes a record of past events.

فَقَالَ الْمَلَاُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ قَوْمِهٖ مَا نَرٰىكَ اِلَّا بَشَرًا مِّثْلَنَا وَمَا نَرٰىكَ اتَّبَعَكَ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ اَرَاذِلُنَا بَادِيَ الرَّاْيِ ۚ وَمَا نَرٰى لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِنْ فَضْلٍ بَلْ نَظُنُّكُمْ كٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿۲۷﴾ [22]

The word مَلَا refers to the leaders and chiefs of a nation. Since they are the ones who have led their nation astray, they feel the most malice towards the efforts of reformation of the prophets of God. The nation of Noah (sws) responded to his call in three ways.

Firstly, he is but a mortal like them. If God wanted to send a messenger, he should have sent an angel or any other superior creation for this purpose or at least should have sent an angel with him as a witness. What is the meaning of sending a mortal as a messenger to mortals? Earlier in verse 12, it is cited that the Quraysh had made precisely the same demand from the Prophet (sws).

Secondly, his followers are the lowly ones of the society who have no significance and respect; they do not have the ability to reflect on matters and make inferences

21. "That worship no one but God. I fear for you the torment of a painful day."

22. The chiefs of his nation who had disbelieved said: "We consider you as a person only like us and we only see the lowliest among us blindly following you. And We also do not see that you have any special distinction in contrast to us. In fact, we regard you as a blatant liar."

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about their consequences. If they have believed in him, it is without using their intellect. Al-Zamakhsharī regards بَادِيَ الرَّأْيِ to be a locus (*ẓarf*) and explained it thus: وقت حدوث أوّل رأيهم.[23] This means that they did what they understood in the first instance and did not care to reflect on it.

Thirdly, if Noah (sws) is such a favoured one in the eyes of his God that He has sent him as a messenger, He should have opened the treasure of this world to him and his companions and should have had a whole entourage of servants and slaves with full fanfare at their disposal. However, the case is quite the opposite. They themselves are much superior to Noah (sws) and his companions with regard to means and resources. Thus he is only trying to over-awe them through a bluff.

قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اَرَءَيْتُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُ عَلٰى بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّيْ وَاٰتٰىنِيْ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِهٖ فَعُمِّيَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ ؕ اَنُلْزِمُكُمُوْهَا وَاَنْتُمْ لَهَا كٰرِهُوْنَ ﴿۲۸﴾[24]

Now in this verse and the subsequent ones, these objections are answered.

The first thing Noah (sws) stated was that what he is presenting before his people is based on two things: one is the divine spark present innately in his nature (clear argument) and the other is divine revelation (God's mercy) he has been blessed with. If his adversaries too had this divine spark in them, they would have regarded his (ie. Noah's) message to be a call of their own hearts and would accepted it as an act of God's mercy. However, because of their ingratitude and misdeeds they have put out their divine spark. The consequence of this is that as per God's law their hearts have been engulfed by darkness and are not even left with any ability to accept any guidance. How can Noah (sws) forcibly stick something on them for which they have no thirst and that too when they are averse even to his name? Readers may take a look at what I have written under verse 17.

وَيٰقَوْمِ لَاۤ اَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مَالًا ؕ اِنْ اَجْرِيَ اِلَّا عَلَى اللّٰهِ وَمَاۤ اَنَا بِطَارِدِ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ؕ اِنَّهُمْ مُّلٰقُوْا رَبِّهِمْ وَلٰكِنِّيْۤ اَرٰىكُمْ قَوْمًا تَجْهَلُوْنَ ﴿۲۹﴾[25]

This verse forms Noah's answer to the chiefs of his nation: if they are not willing to understand his message, it is not his loss; it is entirely theirs. In other words, he is not doing any trade; he is only distributing for free what he gained free.

As far as the fact is concerned that these chiefs regard his followers to be inferior,

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23. Al-Zamakhsharī, *Al-Kashshāf*, vol. 2, 368.

24. He said: "O People of My Nation! Just think that if I am on a clear argument from my Lord and then He also blessed me with His special mercy and it remained hidden from you; so, should we stick it on you when you are also averse to it?

25. And O People of My Nation! I do not ask for any wealth from you for this service. My reward rests with God only and I am never going disregard those who have accepted faith. They will be meeting their Lord. In fact, I see that you are inflicted with ignorance.

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he is not going to shove them away to accommodate their ego. If he does this, how would he face God in the hereafter? The real decision of a person's high or low status is in God's hands.

وَيٰقَوْمِ مَنْ يَّنْصُرُنِيْ مِنَ اللّٰهِ اِنْ طَرَدْتُّهُمْ ؕ اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿۳۰﴾[26]

This is a further explanation of the previous verse.

وَلَآ اَقُوْلُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِيْ خَزَآئِنُ اللّٰهِ وَلَآ اَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلَآ اَقُوْلُ اِنِّيْ مَلَكٌ وَّلَآ اَقُوْلُ لِلَّذِيْنَ تَزْدَرِيْٓ اَعْيُنُكُمْ لَنْ يُّؤْتِيَهُمُ اللّٰهُ خَيْرًا ؕ اَللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِيْٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ ۖ اِنِّيْٓ اِذًا لَّمِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿۳۱﴾[27]

This verse gives a consolidated answer to all the objections raised by Noah's opponents. He has never claimed what they think he has. He is only a messenger of God and is delivering them His message. His companions are the poor and needy and thus they regard them to be lowly. And since in their eyes, the real significance of anything is based on the means and resources of life, they think that if there was any good in his message how could they have been deprived of it while Noah's broke and penniless companions are its worthy recipients. If these opponents conceitedly think that Noah's companions do not have worldly riches, then God cannot bless them with any other good too, then Noah (sws) is not willing to corroborate this conceited notion of theirs. The riches of this world are given to every person whether he is worthy of them or not. However, the treasure of religion is received only by those whose hearts have the ability to accept it and whose nature has not become perverted. Only God knows what is inside a person's heart and nature. Thus if Noah (sws) supports his opponents in this case, he will become unjust like them.

قَالُوْا يٰنُوْحُ قَدْ جٰدَلْتَنَا فَاَكْثَرْتَ جِدَالَنَا فَاْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَآ اِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿۳۲﴾ قَالَ اِنَّمَا يَاْتِيْكُمْ بِهِ اللّٰهُ اِنْ شَآءَ وَمَآ اَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِيْنَ ﴿۳۳﴾[28]

This response was given by Noah's opponents once they had been totally routed in discussion and debate and once the truth had been conclusively delivered to them.

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26. And O People of My Nation! Who will help me against God if I disregard them? Do you people not pay attention to this aspect?

27. And I do not claim before you that I have the treasures of God. Nor do I have the knowledge of the Unseen. I also do not claim to be an angel. And I cannot say about those whom your eyes see as inferior that God cannot even bless them with any good. God alone better knows whatever is in their hearts. If I do this, it is I who would be unjust.

28. They said: "Noah! You have argued with us and argued a lot. So, if you are truthful, bring forth on us that which you are continuously threatening us with." He replied: "Only God will bring it forth on you if He desires and you shall not be able to escape His grasp.

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وَلَا يَنْفَعُكُمْ نُصْحِيْٓ اِنْ اَرَدْتُّ اَنْ اَنْصَحَ لَكُمْ اِنْ كَانَ اللّٰهُ يُرِيْدُ اَنْ يُّغْوِيَكُمْ ؕ هُوَ رَبُّكُمْ ۫ وَاِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿۳۴﴾[29]

The last phase of preaching and counsel is one in which a messenger announces his acquittal once he has discharged his duty and consigns those who have denied him to the fate that becomes destined for them from God. The above cited words of Noah (sws) were uttered in this phase.

اَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ افْتَرٰىهُ ؕ قُلْ اِنِ افْتَرَيْتُهٗ فَعَلَيَّ اِجْرَامِيْ وَاَنَا بَرِيْٓءٌ مِّمَّا تُجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿۳۵﴾[30]

Some people think that this verse addresses the Prophet (sws) and it has come within the anecdote of Noah (sws). Although it can have this status, in my view this verse is a declaration of acquittal at the end of the preaching phase, as has been just referred. This verse actually relates to Noah (sws). Once a messenger declares his acquittal from his nation, its fate is sealed.

وَاُوْحِيَ اِلٰى نُوْحٍ اَنَّهٗ لَنْ يُّؤْمِنَ مِنْ قَوْمِكَ اِلَّا مَنْ قَدْ اٰمَنَ فَلَا تَبْتَىِٕسْ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿۳۶﴾ وَاصْنَعِ الْفُلْكَ بِاَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحْيِنَا وَلَا تُخَاطِبْنِيْ فِي الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا ۚ اِنَّهُمْ مُّغْرَقُوْنَ ﴿۳۷﴾[31]

Noah (sws) was sent this revelation after the above cited declaration of acquittal.

وَيَصْنَعُ الْفُلْكَ ۫ وَكُلَّمَا مَرَّ عَلَيْهِ مَلَاٌ مِّنْ قَوْمِهٖ سَخِرُوْا مِنْهُ ؕ قَالَ اِنْ تَسْخَرُوْا مِنَّا فَاِنَّا نَسْخَرُ مِنْكُمْ كَمَا تَسْخَرُوْنَ ﴿۳۸﴾[32]

According to linguistic principles an incomplete verb is suppressed before the indefinite verb in وَ يَصْنَعُ الْفُلْكَ. It is actually: وَجَعَلَ يَصْنَعُ الْفُلْكَ. When Noah started to making the ship he was directed to, his nation thought that he had gone insane as he was making it to save himself from the threatened punishment. They obviously thought that this threat was not thing by a bluff. Thus they would make fun of him when they passed by him and this naturally would have an effect on him and his companions. However, prophets of God have to pass through such trials. It is evident from this the extent of conviction they have in the unseen about which they warn

29. And even if I want to be your well-wisher, my well-wishing can be of no use to you if God wants to lead you astray. He alone is your Lord and to Him you have to return.

30. Do they say: "He has concocted it?" Say: If I have concocted it myself, then the evil consequence of my crime will come to me and I am acquitted from whatever you are doing.

31. And it was revealed to Noah that no others among your nation will accept faith except the ones who already have. So, grieve not at their misdeeds and make a ship under Our supervision and according to Our guidance. And do not say anything to Me about these unjust people. They are now destined to drown.

32. And he began making the ship. And whenever a group of elders of his nation passed by him, they would make fun of him. He would reply to them: "If you make fun of us, then just as you make fun, we shall also make fun of you."

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people. It is as if they are seeing it with their mind's eye even though they cannot make others see it.

The words "then just as you make fun, we shall also make fun of you" do not mean that they will also indulge in indecent mockery the way their opponents are doing. They actually mean that just as what they are building is a means of making of fun of them, in a similar way, the imminent fate of those indulging in this mockery will increase their faith and conviction. If these people are laughing today, tomorrow they will be crying. On the other hand, Noah (sws) and his companions would be elated at God's help and grateful to Him as well. At times, a sentence is just constructed to impart it a congruent ring to it but its meaning is different. Thus for example, it is said: فِدًى لَّهُمْ كَمَا دَانُوْا. In general circumstances, being happy at the hardships faced by someone is not good conduct. However, when God's torment visits those who have been conclusively delivered the truth, as was the case of Noah's nation, it is a memorable event that signifies the triumph of truth and humiliation of evil. Showing jubilation on this is a requisite of faith.

فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۙ مَنْ يَّاْتِيْهِ عَذَابٌ يُّخْزِيْهِ وَيَحِلُّ عَلَيْهِ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيْمٌ ﴿۳۹﴾[33]

While reading this verse, it should be kept in mind that the torment is of two types. One is meant to shake and jolt the indifferent and disbelieving elements of a nation. Its purpose is to make them pay heed to the preacher's call and after seeing its signs they are urge mend their ways if they want to. The second is one which destroys those who reject a messenger of God once he has conclusively delivered the truth to them. This is a decisive punishment that forever humiliates those who make fun of his warnings and regard his admonitions to be insane. It is not like a wave that comes and passes. It stations itself on the place it descends. Its exemplary account is preserved in the ruins of that place and on the pages of history so that later generations learn a lesson from it. Moreover, this punishment becomes a prelude to the eternal one they would face in the hereafter.

حَتّٰٓى اِذَا جَآءَ اَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ التَّنُّوْرُ ۙ قُلْنَا احْمِلْ فِيْهَا مِنْ كُلٍّ زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَاَهْلَكَ اِلَّا مَنْ سَبَقَ عَلَيْهِ الْقَوْلُ وَمَنْ اٰمَنَ ؕ وَمَآ اٰمَنَ مَعَهٗٓ اِلَّا قَلِيْلٌ ﴿۴۰﴾[34]

The verb فَارَ means "to boil and erupt." It is also used for the seething and boiling of food and also for a shimmering pit of fire. Here the idiom فَارَ التَّنُّوْرُ is used as a

33. "Then you will soon know the ones who are visited by that torment which humiliates them and that scourge descends which stays stationed."

34. Until when Our directive arrived and the storm erupted, We said to him: "Place in the ship both male and female from every species and make your family board this ship except for those about whom the directive has been implemented and [make those board also] who have accepted faith. And few were the ones who had professed faith with him."

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metaphor to signify the cyclonic storm that visited Noah's nation. It resulted in abundant rain and water from nearby seas crossed on to land. At the end of his exegesis of Sūrah al-Dhāriyāt, while summarizing the nature of punishment that descended on Noah's nation, Ustādh Ḥamīd al-Dīn Farāhī writes:

> It is evident from these details that a cyclonic whirlpool wind visited the people of Noah (sws). This caused a tremendous spell of rain that in turn caused the seas to burst forth. In this storm, Noah's Ark got stuck at the mount of Judī.[35]

In the verse under discussion and in verse 43 ahead, the word اَمۡر means "punishment" which is a directive of God.

The words مِنۡ كُلٍّ does not include every single animal including insects and pests. They are spoken with respect to what is in the mind of the speaker. Ie., one pair each of those animals which had been domesticated by people until then and were of benefit to them in various capacities.

The word "directive" in "except for those about whom the directive has been implemented" refer to God's verdict which He proclaimed before Satan on the very first day in response to his ultimatum. He had told him that those among humankind and jinnkind who follow him will be consigned to Hell. In other words, those on whom this directive stands implemented will not be able to board this ship. The rest should be made to board it.

The purpose of the words "and few were the ones who had professed faith with him" is to point out that this storm routed a great majority of people that existed at that time. Evident from these words is also the self-sufficient nature of God: a majority devoid of faith is a pile filth in His eyes. He likes to cleans His earth from it and would not like to let it live merely because it is in vast numbers. At the same time, this reflects great mercy for the believers. Even if they are in small numbers, the merciful and gracious Lord's affection protects them; so much so, even the deluge of Noah (sws) is not able to harm them. Also found in this last part of the verse is a warning for the arrogant majority of the Quraysh and great assurance for the oppressed Muslim minority who had professed faith in Prophet Muḥammad (sws) and were suffering at the hands of the Quraysh in that phase.

وَقَالَ ارۡكَبُوۡا فِيۡهَا بِسۡمِ اللّٰهِ مَجۡرٖىهَا وَمُرۡسٰىهَا ؕ اِنَّ رَبِّىۡ لَغَفُوۡرٌ رَّحِيۡمٌ ﴿۴۱﴾[36]

The words "its sailing and setting anchor is with the name of God alone; my Lord is very Forgiving, Ever-Merciful" signify that however much means and resources be important, believers in reality should trust God and His mercy and not these resources.

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35. Farāhī, *Majmū'ah tafāsīr*, 136.

36. Noah said: "Embark on it; its sailing and setting anchor is with the name of God alone. My Lord is very Forgiving, Ever-Merciful."

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If they are its recipients even a piece of wood floating on a tumultuous sea becomes their support. In its absence even if a titanic available to them may go down in sea in the flash of any eye: all the feats of science will then prove a mirage. The reason that the Prophet (sws) has asked his followers to begin each activity with these blessed words is to make them realize that it is God Who has actually provided them these resources; hence, they should think beyond the apparent. This is because these means and resources work at His behest. The attributes of God mention at the end show that just as it is not correct to rely entirely on means and sources, similarly, deeds, however pious they may be, should not be solely depended upon; the real trust should actually be on the mercy and forgiveness of God. Who knows which deed occupies what weight in His scale.?

وَهِيَ تَجْرِيْ بِهِمْ فِيْ مَوْجٍ كَالْجِبَالِ ۖ وَنَادٰى نُوْحُ ِۨ ابْنَهٗ وَكَانَ فِيْ مَعْزِلٍ يّٰبُنَيَّ ارْكَبْ مَّعَنَا وَلَا تَكُنْ مَّعَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿۴۳﴾[37]

In the Torah, the name of Noah's son is Canaan. The words "Son! Embark with us and do not side with these disbelievers" have a strong ring of fatherly affection and invitation to give up disbelief. The address يّٰبُنَيَّ depicts deep love and likeness for his son.

The present tense found in هِيَ تَجْرِيْ is meat to portray the situation. Similarly, the words وَكَانَ فِيْ مَعْزِلٍ depict the whole scene. Tempestuous wind are blowing; it is raining cats and dogs; waves as towering as mountains are rising all around; Noah's ark is battling with this rough sea; suddenly Noah (sws) sees his son standing in front of him overwhelmed with awe and wonder. It was always possible that this scene be not shown to him. Just as many disbelievers were drowned while he could not see them, his son too could have been made to drown beyond his vision. This was not to be. God wanted him to witness this exemplary event from his very eyes. It was the last test of Noah's (sws) loyalty. This shows the extent of severe tests prophets are made to pass through; however, with God's grace, they sail through them. Also evident from this is the unbiased nature of God's law. If it does not even spare a prophet's son, what to speak of others!

قَالَ سَاٰوِيْٓ اِلٰى جَبَلٍ يَّعْصِمُنِيْ مِنَ الْمَآءِ ۭ قَالَ لَا عَاصِمَ الْيَوْمَ مِنْ اَمْرِ اللّٰهِ اِلَّا مَنْ رَّحِمَ ۚ وَحَالَ بَيْنَهُمَا الْمَوْجُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُغْرَقِيْنَ ﴿۴۳﴾[38]

This verse depicts the last scene of this horrific tragedy

37. And that ship began to take them between waves as high as mountains and Noah called upon his son who was away from this: "Son! Embark with us and do not side with these disbelievers."

38. He replied: "I shall presently take refuge in some mountain that will save me from this water." Noah said: "There is no one to save today from God's wrath except to whom He shows mercy." And a wave came between the two and he was also among those drowned.

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وَ قِيۡلَ يٰۤاَرۡضُ ابۡلَعِىۡ مَآءَكِ وَ يٰسَمَآءُ اَقۡلِعِىۡ وَ غِيۡضَ الۡمَآءُ وَ قُضِىَ الۡاَمۡرُ وَ اسۡتَوَتۡ عَلَى الۡجُوۡدِىِّ وَ قِيۡلَ بُعۡدًا لِّلۡقَوۡمِ الظّٰلِمِيۡنَ ﴿۴۴﴾[39]

The word إقلاع also means "to desist from some task." Thus the sky was asked to stop sending down rain.

The verb غاض occurs both transitively and intransitively. Thus the expression غاض الماء can mean "the water level came down" as well as "the water-level was made to come down." In the verse under discussion, it is used transitively.

Jūdī is the name of a peak in the mountainous range of Ararat. It is called only Ararat in the Bible. The Qur'ān has only mentioned the peak where the ship stopped so that one can grasp the horrific nature of the storm in which the water rose to such a high level in a few days. If in a confined space, there is so much rain that all outlets are not able to drain out rain water, the water-level is bound to rise.

The hate and damnation found in the words "may the curse of God be on the unjust" is too evident and "unjust" here means "being unjust to their souls." In other words, God had created them with lofty abilities but because of their misdeeds, they made themselves a heap of filth on His earth; a storm had to be sent to clean it.

وَ نَادٰى نُوۡحٌ رَّبَّهٗ فَقَالَ رَبِّ اِنَّ ابۡنِىۡ مِنۡ اَهۡلِىۡ وَاِنَّ وَعۡدَكَ الۡحَقُّ وَ اَنۡتَ اَحۡكَمُ الۡحٰكِمِيۡنَ ﴿۴۵﴾[40]

This supplication was uttered by Noah (sws) when he saw his son drowning. Apparently, it should have come after verse 43 but it was deferred in deference to eloquence. In the eyes of God, in spite of being Noah's son, he was such a wretch that until he had been drowned God did not even like to discuss the supplication of Noah (sws). The obvious reason for this was that the greatest fortune in this world for a person can be to be born in the family of God's prophet. Yet this good fortune can become his greatest of misfortunes if it is not given due importance by him and he ends up a devil in the house of a saint. Thus it is clearly evident from the sequence of the discourse that Noah's son has been regarded as one who has been the greatest recipient of God's wrath. It is as if he was the real target of the storm: as soon as he was drowned, the storm was ordered to cease.

This supplication was made by Noah (sws) being overwhelmed by fatherly love while taking advantage of the word "family" mentioned in verse 40: his son Canaan was apparently included in it and he did not precisely know that God had made a

39. And it was ordered: "O Earth! Swallow up your water and cease O Sky!" And the water was brought down and the matter was decided. And the ship came to rest at the mount of Jūdī and it was proclaimed: "May the curse of God be on the unjust."

40. And Noah called on his Lord and said: "O my God! My son is from my family and true is Your promise and among the judges you are the greatest."

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decision about him. This has been referred to while the words "except for those about whom the directive has been implemented" of verse 40 were explained. For this reason, Noah (sws) said that his son was part of his family and that God had promised to save his family through the ship. In other words, he inquired from God about his son's drowning when the promise was made to the contrary.

قَالَ يٰنُوْحُ اِنَّهٗ لَيْسَ مِنْ اَهْلِكَ ۚ اِنَّهٗ عَمَلٌ غَيْرُ صَالِحٍ ۖ فَلَا تَسْـَٔلْنِ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهٖ عِلْمٌ ۭ اِنِّىْٓ اَعِظُكَ اَنْ تَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْجٰهِلِيْنَ ﴿۴۶﴾[41]

The style found in اِنَّهٗ عَمَلٌ غَيْرُ صَالِحٍ is the same as زَيْدٌ عَدْلٌ (Zayd is justice personified). In other words, Noah (sws) is being told that how can such a wretched person be from his family. In other words, the family of a prophet is not merely constituted through lineage but also through faith and righteous deeds. This son of his is among those destined to enter Hell with others.

قَالَ رَبِّ اِنِّىْٓ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ اَنْ اَسْـَٔلَكَ مَا لَيْسَ لِىْ بِهٖ عِلْمٌ ۭ وَاِلَّا تَغْفِرْ لِىْ وَتَرْحَمْنِيْٓ اَكُنْ مِّنَ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿۴۷﴾[42]

After Noah (sws) was admonished, as described in the previous verse, he immediately repented and his repentance was accepted by God.

قِيْلَ يٰنُوْحُ اهْبِطْ بِسَلٰمٍ مِّنَّا وَبَرَكٰتٍ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلٰٓى اُمَمٍ مِّمَّنْ مَّعَكَ ۭ وَاُمَمٌ سَنُمَتِّعُهُمْ ثُمَّ يَمَسُّهُمْ مِّنَّا عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿۴۸﴾[43]

Here it needs to be kept in mind that among a nation destined to be punished, the ones who have accepted faith are protected from this punishment. As a result of passing through severe trials they are cleansed of every evil and hence earn God's special blessings. Their example is the example of potentially healthy seeds that are nurtured in a healthy piece of land because of conducive factors. For this reason, even if they are small in number, they soon grow to embrace the land from all sides.

In the last part of the verse, the Prophet (sws) is assured that at that time, he may have very few companions; but since they are recipients of divine blessings, hidden in their small number are huge communities that will manifest themselves in the future and dominate the whole globe. Thus, history bears witness that after the deluge, it was

41. God said: "Noah! He is not from your family. He is an utter wretch. Do not request from me about which you have no knowledge at all. And I urge you to not be among those who are overwhelmed by emotions."

42. He said: "Lord! I seek refuge with You from asking you for something of which I have no knowledge. And if you do not forgive me and not have mercy on me, I shall be among the losers."

43. God said: "Disembark Noah with Our peace and blessings, upon you and also upon those communities which will come into being from those with you." And there will be some communities which We shall provide for; then a painful torment from Us will seize them.

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these individuals who became a source of re-populating the earth.

Also evident from the words "then a painful torment from Us will seize them" is that not all the nations and communities appearing in future will be blessed; among them, there will be those also who will rise and given respite until a specific period of time and will then be punished by God because of their misdeeds.

تِلْكَ مِنْ اَنْۢبَآءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوْحِيْهَآ اِلَيْكَ ۚ مَا كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُهَآ اَنْتَ وَلَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ هٰذَا ۛ فَاصْبِرْ ۛ اِنَّ الْعَاقِبَةَ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿۴۹﴾[44]

This verse is addressed to the Prophet (sws) and occurs at the end of the anecdote. It is merely God's grace that he was informed of it and through him his nation too; he was not present when the afore-mentioned events were taking place.

It should be kept in mind that this anecdote is for the first time described in the Qur'ān in such a clear way with all its benefits and consequences. Before this, though it has been narrated in the Torah, but this narration is extremely sketchy and distorted. Moreover, both the Prophet (sws) as well as his people had never read the previous scriptures. It was solely through the Qur'ān that they became aware of these past facts. Thus just as these facts carried a lesson for the Prophet (sws) and his companions, they also had a lot of similar guidance for this nation.

The last part of the verse: "So, remain steadfast; the ultimate triumph is for those who fear God" is a summary of the whole anecdote.

وَاِلٰى عَادٍ اَخَاهُمْ هُوْدًا ۛ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ اِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهٗ ۛ اِنْ اَنْتُمْ اِلَّا مُفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿۵۰﴾[45]

The established practice of God regarding His messengers is that they belong to their respective nations. This is because one of their best members conclusively delivers the truth to them in their own language so that this communication does not have any sort of hindrance. In this way, it is as if one's own language and heart bear witness before one's own self and one's own brother counsels them in the best possible way. Thus everyone who has regard for the truth should respect such a person. The word "brother" in the verse actually points to the fact that no stranger was sent to the nation of 'Ād; he was their own brother. However, in their frenzy of enmity, they made this aspect too an excuse for their opposition, as will be referred to in detail later.

The preaching of monotheism mentioned by the verse thus "People of My Nation! Worship God only; no one else is your God" is the common message delivered by every messenger of God to its respective nation. The case of the Prophet (sws) too

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44. This account is from among the news of the Unseen which We are narrating to you through revelation. Neither you knew it before this nor did the people of your nation. So, remain steadfast. The ultimate triumph is for those who fear God.

45. And to 'Ād We sent their brother Hūd as a messenger. He invited them: "People of My Nation! Worship God only. No one else is your God. You are fabricating mere falsehoods.

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was no different.

The words "you are fabricating mere falsehoods" refer to the fact that if these people claim that God has partners, then this is fabricating false allegations against Him. God Himself has never said so.

يٰقَوْمِ لَآ اَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ اَجْرًا ؕ اِنْ اَجْرِيَ اِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِيْ فَطَرَنِيْ ؕ اَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿۵۱﴾[46]

If the Prophet (sws) is expending all his effort and energy to make them understand, he has nothing personal at stake. It is merely his concern for his nation that is not letting him rest at ease in spite of not being received well by it. He is imploring them to attentively listen to him. He wants to give something to it and not take anything from it. Alas! Such a clear message is not being understood by them.

وَيٰقَوْمِ اسْتَغْفِرُوْا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوْبُوْٓا اِلَيْهِ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَآءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّدْرَارًا وَّ يَزِدْكُمْ قُوَّةً اِلٰى قُوَّتِكُمْ وَلَا تَتَوَلَّوْا مُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿۵۲﴾[47]

This is an invitation from Hūd (sws) to his nation to repent from polytheism and disobedience and purely devote itself to God. Repentance has two components: one negative and one positive. The negative one is that a person gives up all his wrong beliefs and deeds and the positive one is that he adheres to true beliefs and deeds. For the first component, the word used is *istighfār*. It means that a person requests his Lord to forgo his sins and hide them under the blanket of His mercy. For the second component, the word used is *tawbah*. It means to turn to something. In other words, a person turns to the straight path prescribed by God which connects him to His creator. The first of these is based on fear and the second on love. Moreover, awareness and realization are an important part of them. Unless all these components exist simultaneously, merely repeating the words of *tawbah* and *astaghfirullāh* will not bring about the repentance which is acceptable to God.

The words يُرْسِلِ السَّمَآءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّدْرَارًا signify abundant rain and وَّ يَزِدْكُمْ قُوَّةً اِلٰى قُوَّتِكُمْ refer to increase in political power and might. These words express the blessings of collective repentance. In other words, these people should not think that it is their deities who are sending down rain on them from the heavens and giving them victory in the battlefield and hence if they forsake them, they will be deprived of sustenance and also lose their poltical power. Their views have no basis. Only God's sovereignty prevails both in the heavens and the earth. For this reason, if a nation turns to God and holds strongly to His rope, the blessings of the heavens and the earth will be rained down on them and they rule the earth. Hence the nation of Hūd (sws) should accept

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46. O People of My Nation! I do not demand any reward from you on this. My reward is with He Who created me. Then do you not understand?

47. And O People of My Nation! Seek forgiveness from your Lord. Then turn to Him. He will pour down abundant rain on you and increase your strength further and do not show criminal evasion."

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this invitation of *istighfār* and *tawbah* delivered to them and not show criminal evasion from it.

Here though the blessings of collective repentance are referred to, it does not mean that individual repentance is without these blessings. A person who gives up his life of sin and turns to God is looked after by His pure sustenance and is blessed with the abiding treasure of mental peace.

قَالُوْا يٰهُوْدُ مَا جِئْتَنَا بِبَيِّنَةٍ وَّمَا نَحْنُ بِتَارِكِيْٓ اٰلِهَتِنَا عَنْ قَوْلِكَ وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿۵۳﴾[48]

The words "clear signs" refer to a palpable miracle. In other words, they are implying that how can they accept this huge claim of his that he is God's messenger and this demand of his that they should leave aside their deities merely because he is saying so. This claim and demand can only be accepted by them if he shows an open miracle to them. In the absence of this, they are neither willing to leave their deities merely on his demand nor prepared to accept is claim of being a messenger.

اِنْ نَّقُوْلُ اِلَّا اعْتَرٰىكَ بَعْضُ اٰلِهَتِنَا بِسُوْٓءٍ ۭ قَالَ اِنِّىْٓ اُشْهِدُ اللّٰهَ وَاشْهَدُوْٓا اَنِّىْ بَرِيْۗءٌ مِّمَّا تُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿۵۴﴾ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ فَكِيْدُوْنِيْ جَمِيْعًا ثُمَّ لَا تُنْظِرُوْنِ ﴿۵۵﴾[49]

The word اعْتَراء means "to be afflicted with."

As soon as Hūd (sws) heard their words cited in the verse, his sense of honour for monotheism was roused. It is evident from the style of the verse that he actually interrupted their words with his response. After announcing his acquittal from them, he challenged them to do what they could to harm him.

اِنِّىْ تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَي اللّٰهِ رَبِّيْ وَرَبِّكُمْ ۭ مَا مِنْ دَاۗبَّةٍ اِلَّا هُوَ اٰخِذٌۢ بِنَاصِيَتِهَا ۭ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ عَلٰي صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿۵۶﴾[50]

These words form the shield and support on the basis of which Hūd (sws) gave the challenge mentioned in the previous verse. He implied that they should not think that he has to reach God after passing through various contorted and twisted paths and, as per their opinion, need a lot of mediators and intercessors. His nature and intellect lead him directly to God.

It may be kept in mind that the idolaters believed that their deities were a means to

48. They replied: "O Hūd! You have not brought any clear sign to us and we are not leaving our deities merely at your bidding and we shall never believe in you.

49. We shall only say that you have been afflicted with a punishment from one of our deities." He said: "I make God a witness and you also be a witness that I am totally acquitted from those whom you associate with God. So, all of you may scheme against me; then do not give me the slightest respite.

50. The forehead of every living being is in His hands. Indeed, my Lord is on a very straight path.

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take them to God and without worshipping them they could not reach Him. As cited in verse 3 of Sūrah al-Zumar, they would say: مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَآ إِلَى اللهِ زُلْفَى.[51]

It is as a result of this belief that the Qur'ān points out their crime of stopping people from the path of God and creating distortions in it. In verse 45 of Sūrah al-A'rāf, it is stated: الَّذِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَيَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا[52]

It is this baseless belief which Hūd (sws) has refuted. A little deliberation shows that unless there exists that concept of God's nearness which exists in a true monotheist, a person cannot have that trust in God which like Hūd (sws) challenges everyone in the world.

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقَدْ اَبْلَغْتُكُمْ مَّآ اُرْسِلْتُ بِهٖٓ اِلَيْكُمْ ؕ وَيَسْتَخْلِفُ رَبِّيْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ ۚ وَلَا تَضُرُّوْنَهٗ شَيْـًٔا ؕ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَفِيْظٌ ﴿۵۷﴾[53]

This is the final warning given by Hūd (sws) to his people. If they do not pay heed to it, they will be routed by God and some other nation will replace them. They should not think that with their destruction, God's world will become deserted. Their decimation will neither harm God nor His world. He is the guardian of everything: whatever becomes useless, He replaces it. He has not abandoned this world after creating it. He is continuously watching over it. If a nation crosses its limits, He destroys it after giving it some respite to mend its ways.

وَلَمَّا جَآءَ اَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا هُوْدًا وَّالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مَعَهٗ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِّنَّا ۚ وَنَجَّيْنٰهُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيْظٍ ﴿۵۸﴾[54]

The word اَمْر here means the punishment that visited them as a result of God's directive. The nature of this punishment is not described here. Ustādh Farāhī has commented on it in detail in his exegesis of Sūrah al-Dhāriyāt. He has begun it in the following words:

> Anyone who deliberates on the details of the destruction of the people of 'Ād will know that they were destroyed by a tempestuous wind. With it were the winter clouds which always appear with thunder and lightning. In verses 23-24 of Sūrah al-Aḥqāf, it is stated: فَلَمَّا رَاَوْهُ عَارِضًا مُّسْتَقْبِلَ اَوْدِيَتِهِمْ ۙ قَالُوْا هٰذَا عَارِضٌ مُّمْطِرُنَا ؕ بَلْ هُوَ مَا اسْتَعْجَلْتُمْ بِهٖ ؕ رِيْحٌ فِيْهَا عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ۙ تُدَمِّرُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ بِاَمْرِ رَبِّهَا (And when they saw the scourge in the form of a

51. We only worship them so that they can bring us closer to God.

52. Those who stop people from the path of God and seek to find distortions in it.

53. Thus if you are paying no heed, then I have delivered the message with which I have been sent to you. And my Lord will bring some other nation in your place and you will not be able to harm Him in any way. My Lord watches over everything."

54. And when Our punishment arrived, We delivered with Our special grace Hūd and those who had believed with him. And We saved them from a very harsh torment. (50-58)

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cloud heading for their valleys, they said: "This is a passing cloud that will drench us." "By no means! It is that what you had been seeking to hasten: it is a hurricane which contains a woeful scourge. It will totally rout everything at the bidding of its Lord.)

It is obvious that these traits belong to the stormy winter wind. In those times, it appears from the north and spreads far and wide creating the destruction of drought and dryness everywhere. In verse 19 of Sūrah al-Qamar, it is mentioned thus: اِنَّآ اَرۡسَلۡنَا عَلَيۡهِمۡ رِيۡحًا صَرۡصَرًا فِىۡ يَوۡمِ نَحۡسٍ مُّسۡتَمِرٍّ.[55] Similarly, in verse 16 of Sūrah Ḥā mīm al-Sajdah, the words are: فَاَرۡسَلۡنَا عَلَيۡهِمۡ رِيۡحًا صَرۡصَرًا فِىۡۤ اَيَّامٍ نَّحِسَاتٍ [56] As pointed out earlier, these storms created by the wind would appear in the winters and it was this period that was considered to be a time of bad omen.[57]

When this punishment descended, the Almighty, in accordance with His established practice kept Hūd (sws) and his companions safe by His grace and destroyed all the rest. The words "by Our special grace" point to God's affection and mercy for the believers. Though a large part was visited by His punishment, it was this special grace that saved the day for them. It was not something ordinary that He saved them from: He saved them from a very horrific torment. Evident from this is the terrible nature of the torment as well as great mercy for Hūd (sws) and his companions. Our exegetes generally relate this torment to the hereafter. However, as per the explanation just given, it was in fact a worldly torment.

وَتِلۡكَ عَادٌ ۖ جَحَدُوۡا بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهِمۡ وَعَصَوۡا رُسُلَهٗ وَاتَّبَعُوۡۤا اَمۡرَ كُلِّ جَبَّارٍ عَنِيۡدٍ ﴿۵۹﴾ وَاُتۡبِعُوۡا فِىۡ هٰذِهِ الدُّنۡيَا لَعۡنَةً وَّيَوۡمَ الۡقِيٰمَةِ ؕ اَلَاۤ اِنَّ عَادًا كَفَرُوۡا رَبَّهُمۡ ؕ اَلَا بُعۡدًا لِّعَادٍ قَوۡمِ هُوۡدٍ ﴿۶۰﴾[58]

The demonstrative pronoun تِلۡكَ is meant to direct the attention of the Quraysh to this anecdote and learn a lesson from it. It is not someone else's story; it is in fact their own. The nation of 'Ād deliberately denied the signs of their Lord like the Quraysh, as is mentioned elsewhere. Though only one messenger was sent to the 'Ād yet they would have adopted the same attitude whichever messenger had presented this message to them. Hence the disobedience to one messenger has been regarded as disobedience to all messengers.

55. We let loose on them a stormy wind at a perpetual time of bad omen.

56. So, over a few ill-omened days We let loose on them a stormy wind.

57. Farāhī, *Majmū'ah tafāsīr*, 133.

58. And this was the nation of 'Ād. They rejected the revelations of their Lord, disobeyed His messengers and followed the way of every tyrant and defiant person. And a curse was made to follow them in this world and on the Day of Judgement too. Listen! The 'Ād denied their Lord. Listen! The 'Ād, people of Hūd's nation be accursed.

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It should be kept in mind that in this world there are just two paths available to human beings: that of the Most Merciful and of Satan. A person has to adopt either. If he does not adopt the path of the Most Merciful, he will necessarily follow Satan. There is no other middle way.

وَ اِلٰی ثَمُوْدَ اَخَاهُمْ صٰلِحًا ؕ قَالَ یٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ اِلٰهٍ غَیْرُهٗ ؕ هُوَ اَنْشَاَكُمْ مِّنَ الْاَرْضِ وَ اسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِیْهَا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوْهُ ثُمَّ تُوْبُوْۤا اِلَیْهِ ؕ اِنَّ رَبِّیْ قَرِیْبٌ مُّجِیْبٌ ﴿۶۱﴾[59]

Among the ancient nations of Arabia, the Thamūd is the second nation which achieved extraordinary fame after the ‘Ād. Their feats in the field of construction have already been referred to in verse 74 of Sūrah al-A‘rāf. Ṣāliḥ (sws) was a member of this nation and was sent to them so that they do not feel any strangeness from him.

The expression استعمرہ فب المکان means that he was deputed for the reform and construction of that place.

The verse explains to the Thamūd that if they developed the art of construction to such an extent, then it was a gift of God to them; they were able to achieve this because of the abilities He blessed them with. Hence instead of showing conceit on these achievements and spreading disorder in the land, they should seek His forgiveness for their sins and sincerely turn to Him.

The last part of the verse implies that if they want to come close to God, all that they need is to turn to Him with sincerity; their deities and intercessors are not the slightest needed to procure His nearness. This is a false notion.

قَالُوْا یٰصٰلِحُ قَدْ كُنْتَ فِیْنَا مَرْجُوًّا قَبْلَ هٰذَاۤ اَتَنْهٰىنَاۤ اَنْ نَّعْبُدَ مَا یَعْبُدُ اٰبَآؤُنَا وَ اِنَّنَا لَفِیْ شَكٍّ مِّمَّا تَدْعُوْنَاۤ اِلَیْهِ مُرِیْبٍ ﴿۶۲﴾[60]

The word مَرْجُوٌّ refers to a person who has been groomed and raised in such a noble way that he has become the centre of expectations for his people and a lot of future hopes are pinned in him. Since prophets of God are the best samples of humanity even before they are chosen for this task, they hold a very distinguished status among their nation as regards their noble traits and character. Such was the requisite of this status that their people should have seriously reflected on their claim to being sent by God. However, it is strange that in general the situation has been quite the opposite. As soon as a person who they regarded to be *ṣādiq* (truthful) and *amīn* (trustworthy) laid claim to

59. And to the Thamūd, We sent their brother Ṣāliḥ as a messenger. He invited them: “O People of My Nation! Worship God, there is for you no god except Him. It is He Who has raised you from the earth and made you populate it. So, seek forgiveness from Him; then turn to Him. My Lord is near and also one who acknowledges.”

60. They replied: “Ṣāliḥ! Before this, a lot of hope was pinned in you among us. Do you stop us from the worship of the deities that have been worshipped by our forefathers? And we are in a great perplexity because of that which you are calling us to.”

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prophethood he was regarded an imposter and liar by them. They even went after his life. Very few turned out to be those who did seriously reflect on his message.

Initially his nation had high hopes from Ṣāliḥ (sws) too. But when he claimed to be a prophet, invited them to monotheism and stopped them from polytheism all these hopes vanished.

In the expression اَتَنْهٰىنَاۤ اَنْ نَّعْبُدَ the letter عَنْ is suppressed in them. Ie., اَتَنْهٰىنَاۤ عَنْ اَنْ نَّعْبُدَ. The words "that which you are calling us to" refer to Ṣāliḥ's (sws) message of monotheism.

The attribute of مُرِيْبٌ with شَكٍّ implies that his nation has now lost hopes in him. Their expectations have been dashed to ground as he has become a person who is spreading disorder in the land.

The word ارابه means "he put him in doubt and confusion."

قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اَرَءَيْتُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُ عَلٰى بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّيْ وَاٰتٰىنِيْ مِنْهُ رَحْمَةً فَمَنْ يَّنْصُرُنِيْ مِنَ اللّٰهِ اِنْ عَصَيْتُهٗ ۫ فَمَا تَزِيْدُوْنَنِيْ غَيْرَ تَخْسِيْرٍ ﴿٦٣﴾[61]

The words بَيِّنَةٌ and رَحْمَةٌ have already been discussed in verses 27 and 28 of this *sūrah*.

In other words, the religion to which Ṣāliḥ is inviting them is a call coming from his inner self and also something that has been taught to him by divine revelation.

وَيٰقَوْمِ هٰذِهٖ نَاقَةُ اللّٰهِ لَكُمْ اٰيَةً فَذَرُوْهَا تَاْكُلْ فِيْٓ اَرْضِ اللّٰهِ وَلَا تَمَسُّوْهَا بِسُوْٓءٍ فَيَاْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابٌ قَرِيْبٌ ﴿٦٤﴾ فَعَقَرُوْهَا فَقَالَ تَمَتَّعُوْا فِيْ دَارِكُمْ ثَلٰثَةَ اَيَّامٍ ۭ ذٰلِكَ وَعْدٌ غَيْرُ مَكْذُوْبٍ ﴿٦٥﴾[62]

Precisely what these verses discuss has also been mentioned in verse 73 of Sūrah al-A'rāf. I have explained it there in detail and also elucidated the nature and occasion of the appearance of the sign of the she-camel.

فَلَمَّا جَاۗءَ اَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا صٰلِحًا وَّالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مَعَهٗ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِّنَّا وَمِنْ خِزْيِ يَوْمِىِٕذٍ ۭ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ الْقَوِيُّ الْعَزِيْزُ ﴿٦٦﴾[63]

The word اَمْرٌ refers to the divine punishment that visited the Thamūd. The

61. He said: "People of My Nation! Reflect a little that if I am on a clear proof from my Lord and He has also granted me a special grace from Himself, then who will help me at the time of God's grasp if I disobey Him? So, you will only increase in ruining me.

62. And People of My Nation! This is God's she-camel as a sign for you. Thus leave it that it may graze in the land of God and do not harm it, otherwise a torment will soon visit you." Then they hamstrung her. At this, he said: "Thrive now in this settlement of yours for three more days; this warning is not going to be a false one."

63. Thus when Our directive was given, We delivered with Our special grace Ṣāliḥ and those who professed belief with him from that torment and from the humiliation of that day. Indeed, your Lord alone is Powerful and Mighty.

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eloquence in it is that as soon as the directive was given, the punishment was immediately meted out to them. It is as if the punishment was hidden in this one word. The expression مِنْ خِزْيِ يَوْمِئِذٍ is actually نَجَّيْنٰهُمْ مِنْ خِزْيِ يَوْمِئِذٍ, as found in verse 58, where the verb has been stated; ie. وَنَجَّيْنٰهُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيْظٍ. In the verse under discussion, the verb has been suppressed because of the presence of concomitant indications. The implication is that it is not that they were secured from some ordinary calamity. They were secured from the humiliation of a day that encompasses both good and bad people. It should be kept in mind that a torment visits a nation who has denied its messenger only when the truth has been conclusively been delivered to it and is not ready to even listen to it because of arrogance and conceit. Thus the distinctive feature of this torment is that it does not merely destroy that nation; it actually humiliates it.

The last part of the verse sounds assurance to Prophet Muḥammad (sws). If people are given some part of God's might and strength, it is because of is His grace. So the Prophet (sws) should rest assured that just as God has routed Ṣāliḥ's enemies, in a similar way, He will one day rout and destroy the Prophet's enemies too and no one will be able to stop Him.

وَاَخَذَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةُ فَاَصْبَحُوْا فِيْ دِيَارِهِمْ جٰثِمِيْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ كَاَنْ لَّمْ يَغْنَوْا فِيْهَا ؕ اَلَاۤ اِنَّ ثَمُوْدَا۠ كَفَرُوْا رَبَّهُمْ ؕ اَلَا بُعْدًا لِّثَمُوْدَ ﴿٦٨﴾[64]

The wor صيحة means "roar." It refers to the punishment that descended on the Thamūd. It is known that thunder and lightning destroyed them, Since the meaning is under consideration here and not the word itself, a masculine verb is used.

وَلَقَدْ جَآءَتْ رُسُلُنَاۤ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ بِالْبُشْرٰى قَالُوْا سَلٰمًا ؕ قَالَ سَلٰمٌ فَمَا لَبِثَ اَنْ جَآءَ بِعِجْلٍ حَنِيْذٍ ﴿٦٩﴾[65]

Coming up is the anecdote of Lot (sws). This verse forms a prelude to it because the angels who had come to destroy his nation were the very ones who were sent to Abraham (sws) with glad tidings of a son and a grand son. The word رُسُل refers to these angels and بُشْرٰى refers to glad tidings of the birth of Isaac (sws) and after him of Jacob (sws), as pointed out in verse 71 ahead.

The verse also depicts the hospitality and generosity of Abraham (sws): he immediately slaughtered a calf from his herd for his guests who were not even known to him. Obviously, only some meat of this calf must have been presented to these

64. And a violent roar overtook those who were unjust and they were left clinging to the ground face down in their houses as if they never lived in them. Listen! The Thamūd were ungrateful to their Lord. Listen! The Thamūd be cursed.

65. And Our angels had come to Abraham with a glad tiding. They said: "Peace." He also replied: "Peace." Not much time elapsed when he brought to them a roasted calf.

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guests. Yet the Qur'ān in order to highlight this prominent trait of Abraham's character mentioned "calf" instead of "meat." It may be kept in mind here that in the nomadic life of those times, this was a great act of hospitality. To host just three guests, Abraham (sws) just slaughtered a whole calf.

فَلَمَّا رَآٓ اَيْدِيَهُمْ لَا تَصِلُ اِلَيْهِ نَكِرَهُمْ وَاَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيْفَةً ؕ قَالُوْا لَا تَخَفْ اِنَّآ اُرْسِلْنَآ اِلٰى قَوْمِ لُوْطٍ ؕ﴿۷۰﴾[66]

Until then, Abraham (sws) thought that his guests were a few decent and upright individuals from a nearby land. But when they did not eat the meat cooked for them with such zeal, he naturally felt that this was something out of the ordinary as they had not accepted the food prepared by him. In fact, fear gripped him. He thought that they may be angels, and if this was true then they must have been sent for some important task. This is because angels only appear when something big is at hand. Quite naturally, his mind must have turned to Lot's (sws) nation. They lived in a nearby land and in spite of the preaching efforts of Lot (sws) had become so arrogant and rebellious that God's punishment seemed imminent. When the angels sensed Abraham's apprehension, they told him that they had been sent to Lot's nation. Concomitant indications show that at that instant, they give Abraham (sws) glad tidings of the birth of a boy.

وَامْرَاَتُهٗ قَآئِمَةٌ فَضَحِكَتْ فَبَشَّرْنٰهَا بِاِسْحٰقَ ۙ وَمِنْ وَّرَآءِ اِسْحٰقَ يَعْقُوْبَ ﴿۷۱﴾ قَالَتْ يٰوَيْلَتٰٓى ءَاَلِدُ وَاَنَا عَجُوْزٌ وَّهٰذَا بَعْلِىْ شَيْخًا ؕ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَشَىْءٌ عَجِيْبٌ ﴿۷۲﴾[67]

The anecdote had begun with the mention of glad tidings for Abraham (sws) in verse 69. However, as soon as he saw the arrival of his guests, he had started to prepare a grand feast for them. For this reason, it was after this that the time for glad tidings came. When these glad tidings were delivered Abraham's wife laughed in disbelief and amazement. This stirred the mercy of God. Thus He directly addressed her and actually specified by name the son and after him the grandson that would be born to her. The various aspects of the special blessing of God and completion of favour found in these glad tidings do not need expression. Moreover, the glad tidings of a grandson after the son gave the assurance that the son would live a considerably long life and a famous grandson will be born of him.

The sentence uttered by Sarah though apparently expressed her wonder; however, concealed in its every word was such jubilation that it needs no explanation. One

66. Then when he saw that their hands were not reaching towards it, he found some peculiarity in them and felt a little fear. They said: "Fear not. We have been sent towards the people of Lot."

67. And his wife was standing nearby. She laughed. Thus We gave her glad tidings of Isaac and after Isaac, Jacob. She said: "Alas! Will I now beget a child when I myself am old and this husband of mine has also grown old? This would be a very strange thing."

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special aspect of Sarah's expression of amazement was that she wanted to receive assurance that the apparent hindrance to the fulfilment of these tidings would be surmounted.

قَالُوْٓا اَتَعْجَبِيْنَ مِنْ اَمْرِ اللّٰهِ رَحْمَتُ اللّٰهِ وَبَرَكٰتُهٗ عَلَيْكُمْ اَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ ۭ اِنَّهٗ حَمِيْدٌ مَّجِيْدٌ ﴿٧٣﴾[68]

It is evident from the words "Do you express wonder" of the angels that they fully understood the reason for Sarah's laughter and the sentence she uttered. Thus in a very respectful way, they directed her attention to her status: how can the wife of a prophet express such wonder?

The pronoun in عَلَيْكُمْ is in the masculine plural. In Arabic, this is a very civilized and polite way of addressing women of a household. The elements of modesty and respect found in this address are quite evident to every person having a literary taste. Clear examples of this style exist in both the Qur'ān and in classical Arabic. It is mentioned in Sūrah al-Aḥzāb:

يُرِيْدُ اللّٰهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ اَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيْرًا (٣٣: ٦٨)

Women of the Prophet's House! God seeks only to eradicate filth from you and to fully purify you. (33:68)

Imr'u al-Qays has said:[69]

فلو أن أهل الدار فيها كعهدنا

وجدت مقيلا عندهم ومعرسا

Fa law anna ahl al-dār fīhā ka 'ahdinā
Wajadtu maqīlaṇ 'indahum wa mu'arrasā

فَلَمَّا ذَهَبَ عَنْ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ الرَّوْعُ وَجَاۗءَتْهُ الْبُشْرٰى يُجَادِلُنَا فِيْ قَوْمِ لُوْطٍ ﴿٧٤﴾[70]

There is an incomplete verb suppressed before يُجَادِلُنَا ie. صَارَ يُجَادِلُنَا. Several examples of this suppression have been pointed out in this exegesis. In verse 38 also, this very style is adopted in وَيَصْنَعَ الْفُلْكَ.

The argument of Abraham (sws) alluded to here is one which is friendly and respectful and has the ring of trying emphatically to persuade God. As long as he did not know the real mission the angels had at hand, he was hesitant and worried.

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68. The angels replied: "Do you express wonder on God's words? Family of Abraham! May God's mercy and blessings be on you. Indeed, God has all praiseworthy attributes and is exalted."

69. Imr'u al-Qays, *Dīwān*, 38.

70. So, when Abraham calmed down him and he received glad tidings, He began arguing with Us about the nation of Lot.

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However, as soon as he received glad tidings of a son and was at peace with his own situation, he started worrying about the nation of Lot (sws). He tried to make recommendations in its favour and tried his best to convince God. It is evident from his words recorded in the Book of Genesis what type of argument is liked by God:

> The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the LORD. Then Abraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" The LORD said, "If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake." Then Abraham spoke up again: "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five people?" "If I find forty-five there," he said, "I will not destroy it." Once again he spoke to him, "What if only forty are found there?" He said, "For the sake of forty, I will not do it." Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?" He answered, "I will not do it if I find thirty there." Abraham said, "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?" He said, "For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it." Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?" He answered, "For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it." When the LORD had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home. (18:22-33)

Abraham's love and trust for his Lord found in this passage as well as his concern and kindness are beyond words. Thus he was praised for this by God.

إِنَّ إِبْرٰهِيمَ لَحَلِيمٌ أَوَّاهٌ مُّنِيبٌ ﴿٧٥﴾[71]

The word أَوَّاهٌ is a hyperbolic form of آہ and literally means someone who utters آہ آہ in profusion. In other words, it refers to a person who is very sympathetic, caring and kind-hearted. Abraham's benevolence and compassion are beyond any doubt if he can argue with God to spare such a nasty and wretched nation as that of Lot's. It was apparent that this nation by then was about to be visited by God's scourge. However, in spite of this, Abraham (sws) continued to plead and implore for it.

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71. Indeed, Abraham was very gracious and very caring and one who was focused towards his Lord.

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يٰٓاِبْرٰهِيْمُ اَعْرِضْ عَنْ هٰذَا ۚ اِنَّهٗ قَدْ جَآءَ اَمْرُ رَبِّكَ ۚ وَاِنَّهُمْ اٰتِيْهِمْ عَذَابٌ غَيْرُ مَرْدُوْدٍ ﴿٧٦﴾[72]

God has praised this kindness and compassion as well as this pleading of Abraham (sws). However, at the same time, He has also informed him that the time of prayer and commendation has expired. It is now time for a punishment that cannot be warded of. Two things are implied by this nature of the punishment: it is not go away after warning them; it is a decisive punishment that will break their backs. Secondly, none will be able to turn it away because none has the might to take on God's directive.

وَلَمَّا جَآءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوْطًا سِيْٓءَ بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ ذَرْعًا وَّقَالَ هٰذَا يَوْمٌ عَصِيْبٌ ﴿٧٧﴾[73]

The worry expressed by Lot (sws) was obviously because of the moral misconduct of his nation: handsome boys coming to his door was a plain invitation to the scoundrels of his nation.

وَجَآءَهٗ قَوْمُهٗ يُهْرَعُوْنَ اِلَيْهِ ۭ وَمِنْ قَبْلُ كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ السَّيِّاٰتِ ۭ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ هٰٓؤُلَاۗءِ بَنَاتِيْ هُنَّ اَطْهَرُ لَكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَلَا تُخْزُوْنِ فِيْ ضَيْفِيْ ۭ اَلَيْسَ مِنْكُمْ رَجُلٌ رَّشِيْدٌ ﴿٧٨﴾[74]

Presenting his daughters was not a choice given by Lot (sws) to his nation. It was meant to awaken their conscience and jolt them. It was his last moment anxious appeal to them so that they may contemplate on the sensitivity this servant of God had for the integrity of his guests: he was willing to go as far as to sacrifice his closest of relatives for them. It was meant to make them realize that contrary to this Prophet of God they have become so blind that they want to molest his guests. He also asked them to fear God and in the end uttered the words: اَلَيْسَ مِنْكُمْ رَجُلٌ رَّشِيْدٌ as if to conclusively convey the truth to them. This is because even if they had the slightest bit of honour left in them for the truth it should have come into action after this sentence. However, when after this also their conscience was not awakened, it clearly meant that they had no element of decency and humanity left in them.

قَالُوْا لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا لَنَا فِيْ بَنٰتِكَ مِنْ حَقٍّ ۚ وَاِنَّكَ لَتَعْلَمُ مَا نُرِيْدُ ﴿٧٩﴾[75]

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72. Abraham! Leave aside this debate. The directive of your Lord has now been issued and that torment is going to visit them which cannot be warded off.

73. And when Our angels came to Lot, he was very sad because of them and was heart-wrenched and said: "This is a very harsh day."

74. And the people of his nation came leaping towards him and they were already engaged in vulgarities. He said: "O People of My Nation! These are my daughters. They are purer for you. So, fear God and do not humiliate me in the matter of my guests. Is there no sensible person among you?"

75. They replied: "You do know that we have no right over your daughters and you well

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They meant that Lot (sws) should not needlessly create impediments in their way. He should let them do what they want to.

قَالَ لَوْ اَنَّ لِیْ بِكُمْ قُوَّةً اَوْ اٰوِیْۤ اِلٰى رُكْنٍ شَدِیْدٍ ﴿۸۰﴾[76]

This sentence was uttered by Lot (sws) in great anxiety and after he had lost all hopes from the ruffians of his nation. It was also meant to prod their conscience. It may be kept in mind that in Arabia of those times giving refuge to someone struck by a calamity when he was seeking refuge was considered a great virtue. Not giving refuge to such a person was considered very mean and lowly. By saying these words, it was as if Lot (sws) had made a conclusive argument against them.

قَالُوْا یٰلُوْطُ اِنَّا رُسُلُ رَبِّكَ لَنْ یَّصِلُوْۤا اِلَیْكَ فَاَسْرِ بِاَهْلِكَ بِقِطْعٍ مِّنَ الَّیْلِ وَ لَا یَلْتَفِتْ مِنْكُمْ اَحَدٌ اِلَّا امْرَاَتَكَ ؕ اِنَّهٗ مُصِیْبُهَا مَاۤ اَصَابَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّ مَوْعِدَهُمُ الصُّبْحُ ؕ اَلَیْسَ الصُّبْحُ بِقَرِیْبٍ ﴿۸۱﴾[77]

Once Lot (sws) said the words cited earlier, the angels revealed their true identity and advised him what to do next.

فَلَمَّا جَآءَ اَمْرُنَا جَعَلْنَا عَالِیَهَا سَافِلَهَا وَ اَمْطَرْنَا عَلَیْهَا حِجَارَةً مِّنْ سِجِّیْلٍ ۙ مَّنْضُوْدٍ ﴿۸۲﴾ مُّسَوَّمَةً عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ؕ وَ مَا هِیَ مِنَ الظّٰلِمِیْنَ بِبَعِیْدٍ ﴿۸۳﴾[78]

The word *sijjīl* is the Arabicised form of the Persian word *sang-i gil*.

The verse implies that these pebbles of clay were not far from these wrongdoers so that time was needed to fetch them. In fact, the furious wind sent by God picked them up from below the feet of these wretched people and showered them on their heads.

Another option is to regard the antecedent of the pronoun هِیَ to be the settlement of Lot (sws) instead of the pebbles, and the unjust be a reference to the Quraysh. In other words, it is being said that the settlement of Lot (sws) is not far from the Quraysh; they pass by it when they travel to Syria. If they really have eyes, they should learn a

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know what we desire."

76. He said: "Would that I had the power to combat you or I could take refuge with a strong support."

77. The angels said: "Lot! We have been sent by your Lord; they will never be able to come near you. So, leave with your family in the last part of the night and none of you should look back. However, your wife is an exception; she too is going to be visited by the calamity that has been destined for these people. The time of morning is fixed for their punishment. Is not the morning near?

78. Thus when Our punishment arrived, We overturned that settlement forthwith and rained down on it layered stones of hard clay which were marked from your Lord. And they were not very far away from these unjust people.

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lesson from it. In verse 89 ahead, Shu‘ayb (sws) while addressing his nation has said: وَمَا قَوْمُ لُوطٍ مِّنكُم بِبَعِيدٍ (and the nation of Lot is not far from you).

Following is a summary of what Ustāz Farāhī has written regarding the nature of punishment meted out to the nation of Lot (sws).

> God sent a blizzard to the nation of Lot (sws). It ultimately became hard and became a storm of pebbles and stones. This in the first place rained down these pebbles on them. Then it became so vicious that their houses were razed to ground. Thus while referring to them, it is said: فَمِنْهُم مَّنْ أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِ حَاصِبًا (to some of these nations We sent a stone-hurling wind (29:40)). Moreover, it is stated: وَأَمْطَرْنَا فَجَعَلْنَا عَالِيَهَا سَافِلَهَا وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً مِّن سِجِّيلٍ (thus We razed that settlement to the ground and rained down stones of clay on them, (15:74)). In other words, the tempestuous winds destroyed their houses and sand pebbles covered them from above. (Tafsir Dhariyat)

وَإِلَىٰ مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا ۚ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَٰهٍ غَيْرُهُ ۖ وَلَا تَنقُصُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ إِنِّي أَرَاكُم بِخَيْرٍ وَإِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ مُّحِيطٍ ﴿٨٤﴾[79]

The underlying wisdom in conclusive communication of the truth in sending a messenger to a nation from among them has already been explained. It has also been explained in detail that monotheism occupies the centre of gravity and the focal point in the preaching of God’s messengers. Deviating from it opens the doors to all deviations and while turning towards it guidance to the straight path is received. Thus Shu‘ayb (sws) too began his preaching with it and then asked them to mend their ways. They had been inflicted by an evil in their collective capacity and in fact regarded it to be an ability and a virtue. His nation, Madyan, was a nation of traders. Thus it was in this area that their moral misconduct appeared the most and dishonesty in weighing and measuring became their skill and profession. One greater expert than the other was born in them and no one had the awareness left in him that this was not the path of development; it was the path to anarchy.

Shu‘ayb (sws) warned them in the words cited by the verse. He implied that that the life of comfort and luxury they were enjoying entailed as much gratitude to God as they could express as well as showing obedience to Him. The very purpose of God in granting such wealth and riches to a nation is to see if it shows gratitude and obedience to Him or not. If it is ungrateful and disobedient, then this very life of opulence and luxury becomes a means of its destruction. Punishment embraces it from

79. And towards Madyan, We sent their brother Shu‘ayb. He invited [them]: “O People of My Nation! Worship God. You do not have any deity except Him and do not weigh and measure less. I see you in prosperity and fear for you the torment of the day which will surround you.

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all sides in such a way that none can escape from it.

Shu'ayb (sws) implied that such a sudden death awaits them if they do not mend their ways.

وَيٰقَوْمِ اَوْفُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيْزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ اَشْيَآءَهُمْ وَلَا تَعْثَوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ مُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾[80]

The last part of the verse implies that their life on earth should reflect goodness, justice and knowledge instead of creating anarchy and disorder in it. People who lead such a life are given respite by their creator until a specific limit. As soon as this expires, such miscreants are wiped out from the face of the earth by Him.

بَقِيَّتُ اللّٰهِ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ۚ وَمَآ اَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيْظٍ ﴿٨٦﴾[81]

The expression بَقِيَّتُ اللّٰهِ means "legitimate profit."

If a trader weighs and measures with honesty, abstains from deception and other such ill-ways and does not adopt the wrong path in imitating others, then he may not rip much profit as those who do not have any sense of what is allowed and what is not, yet his profit occupies the status of being بَقِيَّتُ اللّٰهِ. And even if it is not much, it is much more superior to what others earn in a large amount. This is because it is blessed both in this world and in the next. On the other hand, fraudulently gained profit is condemnable in this world and in the next too it will become a raging fire.

The last part of the verse explains the nature of Shu'ayb's obligation: he has fully explained the right and the wrong to his nation. It is in their own benefit if they follow it; otherwise, they will see its consequences while he himself will not suffer any loss. He is only a warner and a bearer of glad tidings. He is not a keeper on them so that he will be held accountable if they do not accept faith.

قَالُوْا يٰشُعَيْبُ اَصَلٰوتُكَ تَاْمُرُكَ اَنْ نَّتْرُكَ مَا يَعْبُدُ اٰبَآؤُنَآ اَوْ اَنْ نَّفْعَلَ فِىْٓ اَمْوَالِنَا مَا نَشٰٓؤُا ۭ اِنَّكَ لَاَنْتَ الْحَلِيْمُ الرَّشِيْدُ ﴿٨٧﴾[82]

The implication of these words is that since Shu'ayb (sws) regularly offered the prayer, they thought that he would make their forefathers proud and the nation would also prosper; but what good was his prayer for it was trying to wrap up their ancestral religion. It should be kept in mind here that since these miscreants feared that the pious

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80. "And O People of My Nation! Weigh and measure with full fairness and do not be dishonest in the things of people and do not go about spreading disorder in the land."

81. "Only the profit given by God is better for you if you are true believers. And I have not been deputed as a keeper on you."

82. They said: "O Shu'ayb! Does your prayer teach you that we leave those which our forefathers used to worship or we should not use our wealth the way we want to? Are you the only wise and upright person left?"

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and devout life of Shu‘ayb (sws) would influence people who were pious by nature, they targeted his pious deeds with sarcasm and disdain – as if he was the real culprit.

قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اَرَءَيْتُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُ عَلٰى بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّيْ وَرَزَقَنِيْ مِنْهُ رِزْقًا حَسَنًا ؕ وَمَآ اُرِيْدُ اَنْ اُخَالِفَكُمْ اِلٰى مَآ اَنْهٰكُمْ عَنْهُ ؕ اِنْ اُرِيْدُ اِلَّا الْاِصْلَاحَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ ؕ وَمَا تَوْفِيْقِيْٓ اِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ ؕ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَاِلَيْهِ اُنِيْبُ ﴿۸۸﴾[83]

The word بَيِّنَةٌ has already been explained in verse 63 earlier. It refers to the conviction and belief innately found in a person from God. It guides him to the straight path on the condition he has not distorted his nature by being influenced from bad company.

The word رزق حسن here is the same as what is signified by رحمة in verse 63 ie. divine revelation. The reason for adopting this connotation is that just as material sustenance is needed for sustaining a person’s physical being, divine revelation is need for sustaining his spiritual being. While pointing to this very fact, Jesus (sws) is reported to have said: “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” (Matthew, 4:4)

The answer to the conditional clause in the first part of the verse is suppressed. If it is understood in the light of verse 63 which discusses exactly the same topic, the whole sentence would be: “Speak up! If I am on a radiant sign from my Lord; furthermore, He has also blessed me with divine revelation; so, even after this, if I deviate from His path, who will save me from His wrath?” The implication of these words is that they are treating him with disdain and being sarcastic by regarding is earnest calls to be artificial and contrived. On other hand, what he has said to them was the call of his heart even before he received divine revelation; and once he did, his call was substantiated by it. So what else should he say to them?

Shu‘ayb (sws) further said to them that they should not think ill of him: if he is stopping them from being dishonest in measuring and weighing, then it is not that he himself is going to adopt these ill-ways and displace them from the market and capture it for his own self. It is possible that he may have had a small trading business, Taking advantage of this, the miscreants must have spread this wrong view that his purpose was to make them honest while he himself takes control of the market by doing whatever he wants to. It is this wrong notion that Shu‘ayb (sws) tried to stop and expressed his desire that he only wants to mend affairs as far as he could. He further contended that for this only God’s grace can help him and for this he has trusted Him and turned towards Him.

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83. He said: “O People of My Nation! Just think that if I am on clear evidence from my Lord and He has also provided me with a goodly sustenance from Himself; [so what except this should I invite to?] And, by opposing you, I myself do not want to adopt what I am stopping you from. I only want to set right affairs as much as I can. And I shall receive its urge with God’s help only. I have trusted Him alone and I turn to Him only.

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وَيٰقَوْمِ لَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شِقَاقِيْٓ اَنْ يُّصِيْبَكُمْ مِّثْلُ مَآ اَصَابَ قَوْمَ نُوْحٍ اَوْ قَوْمَ هُوْدٍ اَوْ قَوْمَ صٰلِحٍ ۭ وَمَا قَوْمُ لُوْطٍ مِّنْكُمْ بِبَعِيْدٍ ﴿٨٩﴾ [84]

The word شِقَاق means "stubbornness and opposition."

It may be kept in mind that both the period and location of the nation of Lot (sws) were close to those of Shu'ayb (sws). So what the latter meant was that his nation should not think that he was narrating to them tales from the past: the testimony of their recent past as well as that of a nearby place also shows that their attitude is calling for God's wrath.

وَاسْتَغْفِرُوْا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوْبُوْٓا اِلَيْهِ ۭ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ رَحِيْمٌ وَّدُوْدٌ ﴿٩٠﴾ [85]

The words "turn towards Him" means that they should give up their present behaviour and should adopt the way liked by God – towards which he is calling them.

It should be kept in mind that repentance has two components: seeking forgiveness and mending ways. Without giving due attention to both these components, no repentance is acceptable to God.

The attributes of God mentioned at the end of the verse are meant to urge people to seek forgiveness from Him and in a very subtle way also give tidings of the acceptance of their repentance. In other words, it is implied that however much grave their wrongdoings may be, if they sincerely repent, they will not find God rejecting their request. They would be forgiven and be blessed by His affection because He is very Merciful and Loving.

قَالُوْا يٰشُعَيْبُ مَا نَفْقَهُ كَثِيْرًا مِّمَّا تَقُوْلُ وَاِنَّا لَنَرٰىكَ فِيْنَا ضَعِيْفًا ۚ وَلَوْلَا رَهْطُكَ لَرَجَمْنٰكَ ۡ وَمَآ اَنْتَ عَلَيْنَا بِعَزِيْزٍ ﴿٩١﴾ [86]

They implied that baseless and far-fetched is Shu'ayb's (sws) message to them; otherwise who except them could be more receptive to a sound message. After that, they have threatened him in the words cited. The last sentence implies that he as an individual bears no threat to them. They only do not want to enter into a dispute with his family and tribe.

Shu'ayb (sws) was specially threatened of being stoned to death because he used to disparage their deities. It may be kept in mind that the same threat was sounded to Abraham (sws) and other prophets for the same reason.

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84. "And O People of My Nation! Your stubbornness against me may become a cause of you being also visited by the calamity which visited the people of Noah or the people of Hūd or the people of Ṣāliḥ and the people of Lot are also not far away from you."

85. "And seek forgiveness from your Lord; then turn towards Him only. Indeed, my Lord is extremely Merciful and very Loving."

86. They said: "O Shu'ayb! We do not understand much of what you say and we see that you are a weak individual among us. But for your clan, we would have stoned you to death. And you are not the slightest powerful for us."

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قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اَرَهْطِيْٓ اَعَزُّ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ ۭ وَاتَّخَذْتُمُوْهُ وَرَاۗءَكُمْ ظِهْرِيًّا ۭ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ مُحِيْطٌ ﴿۹۲﴾[87]

These words of Shu‘ayb’s (sws) reflect his trust in God.

وَيٰقَوْمِ اعْمَلُوْا عَلٰي مَكَانَتِكُمْ اِنِّىْ عَامِلٌ ۭ سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۙ مَنْ يَّاْتِيْهِ عَذَابٌ يُّخْزِيْهِ وَمَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ ۭ وَارْتَقِبُوْٓا اِنِّىْ مَعَكُمْ رَقِيْبٌ ﴿۹۳﴾[88]

The word مَكَانَةٌ means “place.”

Shu‘ayb (sws) implied that he would continue with his mission of delivering warnings and glad tidings to them even if they continue to do whatever they want to against him. Furthermore, he does not know the future and hence cannot tell them when the punishment will arrive; however, this much is certain that the signs that make them worthy of it have all appeared in them. For this reason, he is waiting for its sudden arrival.

وَلَمَّا جَاۗءَ اَمْرُنَا نَجَّيْنَا شُعَيْبًا وَّالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مَعَهٗ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِّنَّا وَاَخَذَتِ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوا الصَّيْحَةُ فَاَصْبَحُوْا فِيْ دِيَارِهِمْ جٰثِمِيْنَ ﴿۹۴﴾ كَاَنْ لَّمْ يَغْنَوْا فِيْهَا ۭ اَلَا بُعْدًا لِّمَدْيَنَ كَمَا بَعِدَتْ ثَمُوْدُ ﴿۹۵﴾[89]

The content of these verses has already been brought up in verses 66-68 earlier.

وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا مُوْسٰى بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿۹۶﴾[90]

In the next few verses, the anecdote of Moses and the Pharaoh (sws) is briefly referred to. In Sūrah Yūnus, the previous *sūrah*, this anecdote was mentioned in detail but other prophets were only referred to briefly. In this *sūrah*, the case is exactly the opposite. In this way both these *sūrahs* complement one another and thus follow the pattern of paired occurrence of *sūrahs.* I have referred to the details of this phenomenon in the foreword of this exegesis

The word “signs” refers to all those general signs that appeared from Moses (sws) every now and then. The word “a clear proof” refers to the special sign which gave Moses (sws) clear dominance over the Pharaoh and his courtiers ie. the miracles worked by his staff. It is as if a specific sign is mentioned after referring to general

87. He said: “My Nation! Is my clan more powerful to you than God? And you have forgotten Him. Whatever you are doing is encompassed by my Lord.”

88. “And O People of My Nation! Continue doing whatever you are doing; so will I. Soon you will know who is visited by a punishment that humiliates him and who is a liar. And wait! I am also waiting with you.”

89. And when Our punishment arrived, We delivered with Our grace Shu‘ayb and those who had accepted faith with him, and those who had been unjust to their souls were struck by a roar. Thus they were left lying face down in their houses, as if they never lived there. Listen! The people of Madyan were destroyed the way the Thamūd were.

90. And We sent Moses and his chiefs with Our signs and a clear proof.

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ones. It is referred to as "a clear proof" because it was like a forceful argument which totally dented the reputation of the Pharaoh and his courtiers before his people.

إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَإِيْهِ فَاتَّبَعُوْٓا اَمْرَ فِرْعَوْنَ ۚ وَمَآ اَمْرُ فِرْعَوْنَ بِرَشِيْدٍ ﴿٩٧﴾[91]

In other words, instead of following the messenger sent to them by God, these wretched people followed the Pharaoh and were doomed. They fell into the pit in which followers of such leader generally fall.

يَقْدُمُ قَوْمَهٗ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ فَاَوْرَدَهُمُ النَّارَ ۭ وَبِئْسَ الْوِرْدُ الْمَوْرُوْدُ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَاُتْبِعُوْا فِيْ هٰذِهٖ لَعْنَةً وَّيَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۭ بِئْسَ الرِّفْدُ الْمَرْفُوْدُ ﴿٩٩﴾[92]

The verb ورد means to step beside a spring to drink water. In other words, the Pharaoh would be the leader of all those who followed him in the previous world and will lead him to the seething spring of Hell; nothing worse than it exists.

Section III: Verses (100-123)

Coming up are the concluding verses of the *sūrah*. In them, attention is directed to the facts found in the past anecdotes and to highlight which they were actually narrated to the addressees. The lesson the Quraysh should learn from them is also pointed to and the guidance that Prophet Muḥammad and his followers can obtain is also referred to.

Readers may proceed to study these verses in this background.

Text and Translation

ذٰلِكَ مِنْ اَنْۢبَاۗءِ الْقُرٰى نَقُصُّهٗ عَلَيْكَ مِنْهَا قَاۗىِٕمٌ وَّحَصِيْدٌ ﴿١٠٠﴾ وَمَا ظَلَمْنٰهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ ظَلَمُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ فَمَآ اَغْنَتْ عَنْهُمْ اٰلِهَتُهُمُ الَّتِيْ يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ لَّمَّا جَاۗءَ اَمْرُ رَبِّكَ ۭ وَمَا زَادُوْهُمْ غَيْرَ تَتْبِيْبٍ ﴿١٠١﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ اَخْذُ رَبِّكَ اِذَآ اَخَذَ الْقُرٰى وَهِىَ ظَالِمَةٌ ۭ اِنَّ اَخْذَهٗٓ اَلِيْمٌ شَدِيْدٌ ﴿١٠٢﴾ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّمَنْ خَافَ عَذَابَ الْاٰخِرَةِ ۭ ذٰلِكَ يَوْمٌ مَّجْمُوْعٌ ۙ لَّهُ النَّاسُ وَذٰلِكَ يَوْمٌ مَّشْهُوْدٌ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَمَا نُؤَخِّرُهٗٓ اِلَّا لِاَجَلٍ مَّعْدُوْدٍ ﴿١٠٤﴾ يَوْمَ يَاْتِ لَا تَكَلَّمُ نَفْسٌ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِهٖ ۚ فَمِنْهُمْ شَقِيٌّ وَّسَعِيْدٌ ﴿١٠٥﴾ فَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ شَقُوْا فَفِي النَّارِ لَهُمْ فِيْهَا زَفِيْرٌ وَّشَهِيْقٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمٰوٰتُ وَالْاَرْضُ اِلَّا مَا شَاۗءَ رَبُّكَ ۭ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ فَعَّالٌ لِّمَا يُرِيْدُ ﴿١٠٧﴾ وَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ سُعِدُوْا فَفِي الْجَنَّةِ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمٰوٰتُ وَالْاَرْضُ اِلَّا مَا شَاۗءَ رَبُّكَ ۭ

91. To the Pharaoh; then they obeyed what the Pharaoh said even though what he said was not correct.

92. On the Day of Judgement, he will be in front of his people and will lead them to Hell. And what an evil place it will be in which they descend. And a curse has been made to follow them in this world and also in the Hereafter. What an evil reward were they given!

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عَطَآءً غَيْرَ مَجْذُوْذٍ ﴿١٠٨﴾ فَلَا تَكُ فِيْ مِرْيَةٍ مِّمَّا يَعْبُدُ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ ؕ مَا يَعْبُدُوْنَ اِلَّا كَمَا يَعْبُدُ اٰبَآؤُهُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلُ ؕ وَاِنَّا لَمُوَفُّوْهُمْ
نَصِيْبَهُمْ غَيْرَ مَنْقُوْصٍ ﴿١٠٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ فَاخْتُلِفَ فِيْهِ ؕ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ ؕ وَ
اِنَّهُمْ لَفِيْ شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مُرِيْبٍ ﴿١١٠﴾ وَاِنَّ كُلًّا لَّمَّا لَيُوَفِّيَنَّهُمْ رَبُّكَ اَعْمَالَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ بِمَا يَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرٌ ﴿١١١﴾ فَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَآ اُمِرْتَ وَ
مَنْ تَابَ مَعَكَ وَلَا تَطْغَوْا ؕ اِنَّهٗ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ بَصِيْرٌ ﴿١١٢﴾ وَلَا تَرْكَنُوْٓا اِلَى الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ ۙ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ
مِنْ اَوْلِيَآءَ ثُمَّ لَا تُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿١١٣﴾ وَاَقِمِ الصَّلٰوةَ طَرَفَيِ النَّهَارِ وَزُلَفًا مِّنَ الَّيْلِ ؕ اِنَّ الْحَسَنٰتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّاٰتِ ؕ ذٰلِكَ ذِكْرٰى
لِلذّٰكِرِيْنَ ﴿١١٤﴾ وَاصْبِرْ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١١٥﴾ فَلَوْلَا كَانَ مِنَ الْقُرُوْنِ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ اُولُوْا بَقِيَّةٍ يَّنْهَوْنَ عَنِ
الْفَسَادِ فِي الْاَرْضِ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا مِّمَّنْ اَنْجَيْنَا مِنْهُمْ ۚ وَاتَّبَعَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا مَآ اُتْرِفُوْا فِيْهِ وَكَانُوْا مُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿١١٦﴾ وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ
لِيُهْلِكَ الْقُرٰى بِظُلْمٍ وَّاَهْلُهَا مُصْلِحُوْنَ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَلَوْ شَآءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ النَّاسَ اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً وَّلَا يَزَالُوْنَ مُخْتَلِفِيْنَ ﴿١١٨﴾ اِلَّا
مَنْ رَّحِمَ رَبُّكَ ؕ وَلِذٰلِكَ خَلَقَهُمْ ؕ وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ لَاَمْلَـَٔنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿١١٩﴾ وَكُلًّا نَّقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ
مِنْ اَنْۢبَآءِ الرُّسُلِ مَا نُثَبِّتُ بِهٖ فُؤَادَكَ ۚ وَجَآءَكَ فِيْ هٰذِهِ الْحَقُّ وَمَوْعِظَةٌ وَّذِكْرٰى لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ وَقُلْ لِّلَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ
اعْمَلُوْا عَلٰى مَكَانَتِكُمْ ؕ اِنَّا عٰمِلُوْنَ ﴿١٢١﴾ وَانْتَظِرُوْا ۚ اِنَّا مُنْتَظِرُوْنَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ وَلِلّٰهِ غَيْبُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَاِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُ الْاَمْرُ
كُلُّهٗ فَاعْبُدْهُ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَيْهِ ؕ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

These are the anecdotes of the settlements We are narrating to you. Some of them are standing and some have been wiped out. And We were not unjust to them. In fact, they were unjust to themselves. Then when the punishment of your Lord arrived, their deities whom they invoked besides God were of no benefit to them. And they only increased them in ruin. And such is the grasp of your Lord when He seizes the settlements because of their injustice. Indeed, His grasp is very woeful and stern. There is a great sign in this for those who fear the torment of the Hereafter. It is a day for which all people shall be gathered and it shall be a day of attendance. And We are only deferring it for a short while. When that day arrives, no one shall be able to speak without God's permission. Thus some of them shall be unfortunate and some fortunate. So, the unfortunate shall land in Hell. For them is screaming and crying there. They shall remain there as long as the heavens and the earth are intact except what your Lord wills. Indeed, your Lord is able to do whatever He wills. And as for the fortunate, they shall be in Paradise as long as the heavens and the earth are intact except what your Lord wills – a grant from Him that shall never cease. So, do not be in any doubt about what these people are worshipping. They are worshipping the way their forefathers before them have been worshipping. And We shall give them their share in full without any reduction. (100-109)

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And We gave the Book to Moses; then dispute in it arose. And had a matter not been decided earlier by your Lord, judgement would have been passed between them. And these people are in a confounding doubt about it. And your Lord shall surely reward each of them in full for their deeds. He is aware of what they are doing. So, remain steadfast as you have been directed and they too who have repented together with you and do not be deviant. Indeed, He is observing whatever you are doing. And do not lean towards the unjust people so that the fire of Hell seizes you as well. And none except God is your supporter. Then you will not be helped. And be diligent in the prayer in both parts of the day and in a part of the night also. Indeed, virtues take away vices. This is a reminder for those who are willing to be reminded. And be steadfast because God shall not waste the reward of those who are thorough. (110-115)

Thus why did this not happen that there be such people in the previous nations who stopped [people] from spreading disorder in the land? But few were those who We delivered from among them, and those who were unjust to their souls continued to be engrossed in the lavishness they were in and they were wrongdoers. And your Lord is not One Who destroys the settlements because of some oppression when its inhabitants are keenly mending ways. (116-117)

And had your Lord willed, He would have made people into one community and they will continue to differ except those on whom your Lord has mercy. And precisely for this reason, He has created them. And the words of your Lord were fulfilled: "I shall fill Hell with both jinnkind and mankind." (118-119)

And We are narrating to you each of the anecdotes of the messengers through which We can strengthen your heart. And the truth has come to you in them and there is an advice and a reminder in them for the believers. And tell those who are not believing: Do according to your way; We shall continue on our way. And you also wait; we are also waiting. And whatever is concealed in the heavens and the earth is known to God and all matters are returned to Him alone. So, worship Him only and trust Him alone. And your Lord is not unaware of whatever you are doing. (120-123)

Explanation

ذٰلِكَ مِنْ اَنْۢبَآءِ الْقُرٰى نَقُصُّهٗ عَلَيْكَ مِنْهَا قَآئِمٌ وَّحَصِيْدٌ ﴿١٠٠﴾[93]

Verse 120 ahead fully explains what is stated here.

The word حَصِيْدٌ refers crops that have been harvested. Here it refers to the settlements which were totally destroyed by divine punishment. An example of those standing is Egypt. God sifted out the Pharaoh and his nation from it and had them drowned in the sea. Houses remained intact while their inhabitants were wiped out.

The word حَصِيْدٌ refers to the settlements of the nation of Hūd (sws) and Lot (sws).

93. These are the anecdotes of the settlements We are narrating to you. Some of them are standing and some have been wiped out.

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Both its houses and their inhabitants were destroyed. Only the ruins and remnants of some of them remained to narrate a lesson. These lines are directed at the Quraysh to make them realize that if they continue with their stubbornness, they too will end up in either of the two fates referred to. Judgement will be passed on them because a messenger has been sent to them.

وَمَا ظَلَمْنٰهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ ظَلَمُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ فَمَآ اَغْنَتْ عَنْهُمْ اٰلِهَتُهُمُ الَّتِيْ يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ لَّمَّا جَآءَ اَمْرُ رَبِّكَ ۭ وَمَا زَادُوْهُمْ غَيْرَ تَتْبِيْبٍ ﴿١٠١﴾[94]

In other words, these people wasted the high qualities with which they were created by God and by being disobedient to the directives of God and His messenger called for their own doom.

False supports only increase hardships and deprivation in times of need. If someone thirsty runs towards a mirage, death will be staring at him once he comes to know the reality. If he had not been misled by it, some way or the other might have come before him to save his life.

وَكَذٰلِكَ اَخْذُ رَبِّكَ اِذَآ اَخَذَ الْقُرٰى وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ ۭ اِنَّ اَخْذَهٗٓ اَلِيْمٌ شَدِيْدٌ ﴿١٠٢﴾[95]

This verse though addresses the Prophet (sws), it is actually directed at the Quraysh to warn them. They should know that they too are facing the same yardstick with which previous nations have been measured. There is no reason that God should deal differently with them.

اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّمَنْ خَافَ عَذَابَ الْاٰخِرَةِ ۭ ذٰلِكَ يَوْمٌ مَّجْمُوْعٌ ۙ لَّهُ النَّاسُ وَذٰلِكَ يَوْمٌ مَّشْهُوْدٌ ﴿١٠٣﴾[96]

The verse implies that just as these anecdotes depict the worldly punishment of nations if they deny their respective messengers, in the same way, there is a great sign in them for those who fear the punishment of the hereafter. Evident from these events are the attributes of the creator and master of this world. Moreover, the standard of His likes and dislikes is also ascertained: when He punishes the rebels and rebellious people of this world in such an exemplary manner, how is it possible that a Day of Judgement not come for all people of the world; thus it is essential that such a day

94. And We were not unjust to them. In fact, they were unjust to themselves. Then when the punishment of your Lord arrived, their deities whom they invoked besides God were of no benefit to them. And they only increased them in ruin.

95. And such is the grasp of your Lord when He seizes the settlements because of their injustice. Indeed, His grasp is very woeful and stern.

96. There is a great sign in this for those who fear the torment of the Hereafter. It is a day for which all people shall be gathered and it shall be a day of attendance.

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come in which the righteous are rewarded and the wrongdoers are punished for their deeds. In other words, these events of history bear witness that this world is not a place of entertainment or amusement. It is, in fact, created by a just and wise God. Hence, it is essential that a day come in which His perfect justice manifests itself and everyone be held accountable.

The verse mentions that every individual will be gathered on the Day of Judgement: the past ones as well as the future ones; the prophets and their nations too; those who invited people to good and those too who invited them to evil; the rulers and also the rules; the witnesses and those to whom witness was borne. Obviously, the reason for this assembly would be to mete out reward and punishment. It will be a day of attendance so that all the contestants of a case are present and justice is fully administered. This fact is stated at other instances in the Qur'ān too. Following is a reference to some verses so that its true concept is formed in the mind:

وَالسَّمَآءِ ذَاتِ الْبُرُوْجِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْمَوْعُوْدِ وَشَاهِدٍ وَّمَشْهُوْدٍ (٨٥: ١-٣)

By the sky consisting of forts and the promised day and one who sees and that what is seen. (85:1-3)

اِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ يَقُوْمُ الْاَشْهَادُ (٤٠: ٥١)

And indeed We help Our messengers and the true believers in the life of this world and will also help them on the Day when the witnesses rise to testify. (40:51)

وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ فِيْ كُلِّ اُمَّةٍ شَهِيْدًا عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ اَنْفُسِهِمْ (١٦: ٨٩)

And bear in mind the day when We shall raise a witness from within each community. (16:89)

يَّوْمَ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ اَلْسِنَتُهُمْ وَاَيْدِيْهِمْ وَ اَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ(٢٤: ٢٤)

On the day, when their tongues, hands and feet shall bear witness before them to their deeds. (24:24)

وَمَا نُؤَخِّرُهٗٓ اِلَّا لِاَجَلٍ مَّعْدُوْدٍ ﴿١٠٤﴾[97]

The verse implies that these people should not think that there is a limitless period before the arrival of that day so that they do not need to disrupt their luxurious life. It is in fact a limited interval of time. And this of course is no statement of exaggeration and neither is it stated with regard to God's knowledge. It is an expression of a fact.

97. And We are only deferring it for a short while.

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This is because for any person who passes away, his Day of Judgement has arrived, as is mentioned in a narrative.[98] When souls are raised to life after the trumpet is sounded, they will not remember their time spent in Barzakh. Everyone will think that he had just slept and woken up. Thus it can be concluded that the time of Day of Judgement for every soul is as much as his own life-span. And this life-span is a specific period of time.

يَوْمَ يَاْتِ لَا تَكَلَّمُ نَفْسٌ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِهٖ ۚ فَمِنْهُمْ شَقِيٌّ وَّسَعِيْدٌ ﴿١٠٥﴾[99]

This verse refutes the notion of the idolaters that such is the status of their deities before God that whatever their own deeds they would be able to intercede for them on the Day of Judgement. God would be compelled to hear and comply what they say and give favour to them. About the angels, they reckoned that they were favourite daughters of God and just as in this world daughters can affectionately coax their fathers to fulfil their desires, these angels would be able to earn forgiveness from their father (God) for all those who worshipped them. This verse refutes all these baseless expectations: none will be able to speak before God unless He permits, let alone cajole Him. At another instance (78:38), it is said that even after this permission, he who speaks will always state the truth.

The fortunate among those gathered on that day would go to Paradise and the unfortunate would land in Hell. This accountability will be based on their deeds.

فَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ شَقُوْا فَفِى النَّارِ لَهُمْ فِيْهَا زَفِيْرٌ وَّشَهِيْقٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمٰوٰتُ وَالْاَرْضُ اِلَّا مَا شَآءَ رَبُّكَ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ فَعَّالٌ لِّمَا يُرِيْدُ ﴿١٠٧﴾[100]

Both زَفِيْرٌ and شَهِيْقٌ are words used for the sound made by donkeys. The former is used when it brays and exhales its breath and the latter is for the sound when it inhales. Evident in both these words is the element of humiliation and degradation for the inhabitants of Hell.

The heavens and the earth referred to are the ones which will come into being after the present ones are destroyed. They are referred to in verse of 48 of Sūrah Ibrāhīm thus: يَوْمَ تُبَدَّلُ الْاَرْضُ غَيْرَ الْاَرْضِ وَالسَّمٰوٰتُ.[101]

The exception stated in the verse implies that if God wants He can reduce the

98. Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilyah*, vol. 6, 268.

99. When that day arrives, no one shall be able to speak without God's permission. Thus some of them shall be unfortunate and some fortunate.

100. So, the unfortunate shall land in Hell. For them is screaming and crying there. They shall remain there as long as the heavens and the earth are intact except what your Lord wills. Indeed, your Lord is able to do whatever He wills.

101. Remember the day when this earth will be replaced by another and the sky too.

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punishment of some or reduce him to dust and ashes. None can stop Him.

وَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ سُعِدُوْا فَفِي الْجَنَّةِ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمٰوٰتُ وَالْاَرْضُ اِلَّا مَا شَآءَ رَبُّكَ ؕ عَطَآءً غَيْرَ مَجْذُوْذٍ ﴿۱۰۸﴾[102]

The exception stated in this verse implies that the rank and status of the dwellers of Paradise will change with time for the better. This is because God's bounty on them will never cease.

فَلَا تَكُ فِيْ مِرْيَةٍ مِّمَّا يَعْبُدُ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ ؕ مَا يَعْبُدُوْنَ اِلَّا كَمَا يَعْبُدُ اٰبَآؤُهُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلُ ؕ وَاِنَّا لَمُوَفُّوْهُمْ نَصِيْبَهُمْ غَيْرَ مَنْقُوْصٍ ﴿۱۰۹﴾[103]

It has been specified at a number of instances in this exegesis that at times a verse is addressed to the Prophet (sws) but the anger in it is directed at his opponents. This is because they do not remain worthy of being addressed because of their stubbornness. An example of this usage can be seen in verses 94-95 of Sūrah Yūnus, the previous *sūrah*.

In other words, the Prophet (sws) is being told here that if these people are deeply attached to their creed of polytheism, it does not mean that they have any sound reasoning in its favour: just as their forefather have been worshipping idols without giving any thought or consideration, they are also continuing in their ways in such a blind fashion. Both of them have not cared to use their intellect in this matter.

وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ فَاخْتُلِفَ فِيْهِ ؕ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ ؕ وَاِنَّهُمْ لَفِيْ شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مُرِيْبٍ ﴿۱۱۰﴾[104]

The context in which this verse occurs is precisely the same as in which it occurs in the following verses of Sūrah Ḥām Mīm al-Sajdah:

مَا يُقَالُ لَكَ اِلَّا مَا قَدْ قِيْلَ لِلرُّسُلِ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُوْ مَغْفِرَةٍ وَّذُوْ عِقَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ وَلَوْ جَعَلْنٰهُ قُرْاٰنًا اَعْجَمِيًّا لَّقَالُوْا لَوْلَا فُصِّلَتْ اٰيٰتُهٗ ؕ ءَاَعْجَمِيٌّ وَّعَرَبِيٌّ ؕ قُلْ هُوَ لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا هُدًى وَّشِفَآءٌ ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ فِيْٓ اٰذَانِهِمْ وَقْرٌ وَّهُوَ عَلَيْهِمْ عَمًى ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ يُنَادَوْنَ مِنْ مَّكَانٍۢ بَعِيْدٍ وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ فَاخْتُلِفَ فِيْهِ ؕ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ ؕ وَاِنَّهُمْ لَفِيْ شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مُرِيْبٍ (۴۱: ۴۳-۴۵)

Nothing is being said to you that was not said to other prophets before you. Indeed, your Lord is greatly forgiving as well as very stern in retribution. And had We revealed the Qur'an in a foreign tongue, these people would have objected: "Why

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102. And as for the fortunate, they shall be in Paradise as long as the heavens and the earth are intact except what your Lord wills – a grant from Him that shall never cease.

103. So, do not be in any doubt about what these people are worshipping. They are worshipping the way their forefathers before them have been worshipping. And We shall give them their share in full without any reduction.

104. And We gave the Book to Moses; then dispute in it arose. And had a matter not been decided earlier by your Lord, judgement would have been passed between them.

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were not its verses expounded?" The discourse in a foreign tongue, and the addressees Arabs?" Say: "It is a guide and a cure for those who profess faith in it." As for those who are not professing faith, there is deafness in their ears and this is a like a covering for them. Now these people will be called from a far-off place. And We also gave the Book to Moses, but differences were created in it. And had for a word from your Lord not been decreed earlier, the matter would have been decided between them and these people are in a confusing doubt from it. (41:43-45)

The verse under discussion is meant to sound assurance. The Prophet (sws) is told that just as his own people went after him after he presented the Qur'ān before them, similarly the people of Moses' (sws) nation disputed with him at every step regarding the Torah and created differences in it. In other words, the situation he is facing was faced by his predecessors. So, just as they showed perseverance in the wake of adversity, he too should follow suit: God will grant him victory over his adversaries. Since God has ordained a time for every event, everything will happen according to this time table. He has prescribed a time of respite for his nation too. When this time reaches its culmination, they will complete their period and judgement shall be passed between them.

The word مُرِيْب means "something that puts someone in doubt." The reason to bring this attribute is to delineate that the denial of his adversaries was based only on desire: it had no actual basis. What the Prophet (sws) is presenting is clear proof to them but they do not want to accept it. For this reason they are confounded by a perplexing doubt.

وَاِنَّ كُلًّا لَّمَّا لَيُوَفِّيَنَّهُمْ رَبُّكَ اَعْمَالَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ بِمَا يَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرٌ ﴿۱۱۱﴾[105]

In the expression: اِنَّ كُلًّا لَّمَّا لَيُوَفِّيَنَّهُمْ, the ل is for emphasis and oath and ما is to fulfil the requisites of sound and rhyme. Other examples of such usage also occur in the Qur'ān. Thus in verse 35 of Sūrah al-Zukhruf, it is stated: وَاِنْ كُلُّ ذٰلِكَ لَمَّا مَتَاعُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا.[106] Similarly, in verse 4 of Sūrah al-Ṭāriq, the words are: اِنْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ لَّمَّا عَلَيْهَا حَافِظٌ.[107]

Though the كُلُّ word is a general one, it refers to the afore-mentioned groups of the Idolaters of the Quraysh and the Jews.

It may be kept in mind that the phase of preaching in which this *sūrah* was revealed was one in which the Jews had started to support the Quraysh.

فَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَآ اُمِرْتَ وَمَنْ تَابَ مَعَكَ وَلَا تَطْغَوْا ؕ اِنَّهٗ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ بَصِيْرٌ ﴿۱۱۲﴾[108]

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105. And your Lord shall surely reward each of them in full for their deeds. He is aware of what they are doing.

106. And these things are only provisions of worldly life.

107. There is not a soul which does not have a guardian over it.

108. So, remain steadfast as you have been directed and they too who have repented together with you and do not be deviant. Indeed, He is observing whatever you are doing.

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This verse urges the Prophet (sws) and his companions to adhere to the true path. In the wake of this storm of hardships, they should steadfastly tread on it. They should not deviate from it while being over-awed by these circumstances. Since God is observing what they are doing, He will guide you in these hardships and will help them when they need His help.

وَلَا تَرْكَنُوْٓا اِلَى الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ ۙ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مِنْ اَوْلِيَآءَ ثُمَّ لَا تُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿۱۱۳﴾[109]

The verse says that if they incline themselves to the disbelievers and the idolaters, they will end up in Hell in the next world and also deprive themselves of the promised help in this one. This promise is dependent on the condition of steadfastness. Without it, the Prophet (sws) and his companions will not be eligible for help.

وَاَقِمِ الصَّلٰوةَ طَرَفَيِ النَّهَارِ وَزُلَفًا مِّنَ الَّيْلِ ۭ اِنَّ الْحَسَنٰتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّاٰتِ ۭ ذٰلِكَ ذِكْرٰى لِلذّٰكِرِيْنَ ﴿۱۱۴﴾ وَاصْبِرْ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿۱۱۵﴾[110]

This verse describes the means to the steadfastness the previous verse urges. It has been mentioned at a number of instances in the Qur'ān that it is the prayer which is a person's real spiritual strength to combat the adversities of Satan and his accomplices. It is the prayer that connects him to God and when he gets connected to Him, he receives His bounties and blessings. His heart is cleansed from stray thoughts and weaknesses and he becomes fully prepared to face adverse circumstances. In Sūrah Ṭāhā, this mutual relationship between the prayer and steadfastness is explained thus:

فَاصْبِرْ عَلٰي مَا يَقُوْلُوْنَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوْعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ غُرُوْبِهَا ۚ وَمِنْ اٰنَاۗئِ الَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْ وَاَطْرَافَ النَّهَارِ لَعَلَّكَ تَرْضٰى (۲۰: ۱۳۰)

So, show patience on whatever they say and keep extolling your Lord while glorifying Him before the sun rises and before it sets and glorify him in the night times too and on the margins of the day also so that you are showered with favours. (20:130)

The verse under discussion does not state the times of the prayer. However, deliberation on the afore-mentioned verse of Sūrah Ṭāha shows that it not only mentions the times of the five prayers, it also tacitly refers to the times of the *chāsht* and the *tahajjud* prayers. However, here I only intend to explain the mutual relationship between steadfastness and the prayer.

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109. And do not lean towards the unjust people so that the fire of Hell seizes you as well. And none except God is your supporter. Then you will not be helped.

110. And be diligent in the prayer in both parts of the day and in a part of the night also. Indeed, virtues take away vices. This is a reminder for those who are willing to be reminded. And be steadfast because God shall not waste the reward of those who are thorough.

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The sentence "indeed, virtues take away vices" states a general principle. The words "virtues" encompasses the prayer and all good deeds that belong to its category. In other words, the Prophet (sws) and his companions should continue to adhere to these virtues with full fervour. This is because it is these virtues that will counter the evil that arise from within and from the surroundings of a person.

The sentence "This is a reminder for those who are willing to be reminded" directs attention to the value of guidance: it must not be regarded as ordinary. It is a treasure of advice to those who want to understand. This warning was also necessary because it was not easy for everyone to comprehend that the prayer is the greatest weapon in the *jihād* to tread the path of the truth.

Consider now the sentence "And be steadfast because God shall not waste the reward of those who are thorough." It is to strengthen this steadfastness that the previous verse directs people to adhere to the prayer, as indicated earlier. Urging the Prophet (sws) to adhere to steadfastness before the prayer is mentioned and to adhere to steadfastness after its mention points to a fact: steadfastness and persistence are commendable only when one's direction is correct. Moreover, there is also another point in this verse. It is not said: "Be steadfast because God will not waste the reward of the patient." On the contrary, the words used are: "Be steadfast because God does not waste the reward of those who are thorough in their deeds." The purpose of using these words is that steadfastness of only those people is dear to God and worthy of reward who are steadfast in every sense of the word. Everyone becomes steadfast and patient after crying and complaining. The steadfastness of the thorough is that even if they face the worse type of difficulties they do not brood and grumble. The reward of those who show steadfastness with such dignity is never wasted.

فَلَوْ لَا كَانَ مِنَ الْقُرُوْنِ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ اُولُوْا بَقِيَّةٍ يَّنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْفَسَادِ فِي الْاَرْضِ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا مِّمَّنْ اَنْجَيْنَا مِنْهُمْ ۚ وَ اتَّبَعَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا مَآ اُتْرِفُوْا فِيْهِ وَ كَانُوْا مُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿۱۱۶﴾[111]

The expression فلان بقية قومه means "he is from among the righteous of his nation."

The expression أترفه المال means "wealth and resources made him arrogant and rebellious."

These verses while pointing to the doomed nations referred to earlier state the reason of their destruction. The purpose is to warn the Quraysh that if they too adopt the same attitude, there is no reason that their own fate be any different.

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111. Thus why did this not happen that there be such people in the previous nations who stopped [people] from spreading disorder in the land? But few were those who We delivered from among them, and those who were unjust to their souls continued to be engrossed in the lavishness they were in and they were wrongdoers.

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وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ لِيُهْلِكَ الْقُرٰى بِظُلْمٍ وَّ اَهْلُهَا مُصْلِحُوْنَ ﴿۱۱۷﴾[112]

This verse delineates the established practice of God regarding the destruction of nations. In other words, His punishment visits a nation only when its attitude changes for the worse in its collective capacity. Those who can reform its affairs either no longer exist or are very few in number.

The word قُرٰى here refers to nations.

The purpose that the word بِظُلْمٍ is undefined is to show that individual wrongdoings do not bring God's punishment. It descends when the attitude of a nation worsens in its collective capacity.

وَلَوْ شَآءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ النَّاسَ اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً وَّلَا يَزَالُوْنَ مُخْتَلِفِيْنَ ﴿۱۱۸﴾ اِلَّا مَنْ رَّحِمَ رَبُّكَ ؕ وَلِذٰلِكَ خَلَقَهُمْ ؕ وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ لَاَمْلَـَٔنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿۱۱۹﴾[113]

The verse implies that none could have stopped God from making mankind into one community. However, He did not like to force people to accept guidance; what He did was that He explained the fate of good and evil deeds before them and gave them the option to choose between them. If they adopt a virtuous life, its reward is success in the eternal life of the hereafter. On the other hand, if they hold on to vices, they will bear its punishment in the hereafter.

In other words, as a natural consequence of giving this choice to people, it should not be expected that everyone will adopt the path of virtue. On the contrary, there will be many who, in spite of being reminded, will adopt the path of vice while following Satan and their own evil desires; they will live and die on it. Only they will be secure from adopting this path who receive God's mercy. It is evident from the context here that only they are worthy of God's mercy who use their faculties of hearing, sight and intellect and not stumble in spite of having eyes. God has created people so that they out of their own choice make themselves worthy of His mercy. This trial is an essential part of creating mankind. Without passing through it, none can become worthy of God's mercy.

The last part of the verse "And the words of your Lord were fulfilled: "I shall fill Hell with both jinnkind and mankind" refers to what God had said in response to Satan when he had refused to prostrate before Adam (sws). Satan had said that he

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112. And your Lord is not One Who destroys the settlements because of some oppression when its inhabitants are keenly mending ways.

113. And had your Lord willed, He would have made people into one community and they will continue to differ except those on whom your Lord has mercy. And precisely for this reason, He has created them. And the words of your Lord were fulfilled: "I shall fill Hell with both jinnkind and mankind."

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would lure mankind away and that God will find most of them to be ingrates. In reply to these words, God had said that He will fill Hell with all such people.

114 وَكُلًّا نَّقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ اَنْۢبَآءِ الرُّسُلِ مَا نُثَبِّتُ بِهٖ فُؤَادَكَ ۚ وَجَآءَكَ فِيْ هٰذِهِ الْحَقُّ وَمَوْعِظَةٌ وَّذِكْرٰى لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿۱۲۰﴾

While referring to these past anecdotes it is being said to the Quraysh that history of the dominance of the truth on evil is all based on facts. This is what happened and this is what will happen. It is an established practice of God and the establish practice of God does not change. Moreover, these anecdotes sound a reminder to those who have professed faith in the Prophet (sws); they make evident what they must avoid in the storm of the opposition they face as well as the path they should adopt.

115 وَقُلْ لِّلَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ اعْمَلُوْا عَلٰى مَكَانَتِكُمْ ۭ اِنَّا عٰمِلُوْنَ ﴿۱۲۱﴾ وَانْتَظِرُوْا ۚ اِنَّا مُنْتَظِرُوْنَ ﴿۱۲۲﴾

Now here at the end, the adversaries of the Prophet (sws) are given a final answer.

If they demand punishment, then they should wait and the Prophet (sws) is also waiting. This is because all the signs which make them worthy of punishment are appearing in them one by one. However, sending punishment is God's discretion; only He knows its time.

116 وَلِلّٰهِ غَيْبُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَاِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُ الْاَمْرُ كُلُّهٗ فَاعْبُدْهُ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَيْهِ ۭ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿۱۲۳﴾

In this last verse, the Prophet (sws) is directed to consign all the matter to God, fervently concentrate on worship and full trust Him. He is with him at every step and will help him in hardships.

This finishes the exegesis of the *sūrah*.

وَاٰخِرُ دَعْوٰىهُمْ اَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ (and our last prayer is that gratitude be to God, Lord of the world).

Lahore
02nd May 1970 AD
25th Ṣafr 1390 AH

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114. And We are narrating to you each of the anecdotes of the messengers through which We can strengthen your heart. And the truth has come to you in them and there is an advice and a reminder in them for the believers.

115. And tell those who are not believing: Do according to your way; We shall continue on our way. And you also wait; we are also waiting.

116. And whatever is concealed in the heavens and the earth is known to God and all matters are returned to Him alone. So, worship Him only and trust Him alone. And your Lord is not unaware of whatever you are doing.

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Tadabbur i Qur'ān

12 – Sūrah Yūsuf

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Sūrah Yūsuf

Theme

This chapter began with Sūrah Yūnus. I have already presented my comprehensive comments on the theme of this chapter at the beginning of that *sūrah*. I am reproducing its essential part here so that what was written is refreshed in the minds of the readers:

> If we repeatedly read this chapter with deep deliberation, we see that there is one common theme which is found in various styles and aspects in all the *sūrahs*: the conflict between truth and falsehood which has ensued because of the Prophet's preaching will ultimately end on his success and that of his followers and in the humiliation and defeat of the Quraysh. In other words, found in this is a warning for the latter and glad tidings for the former. Through the testimony of sense and reason and through the signs found in a person and that around him as well as through the system of this universe, it is made evident to the Quraysh that if they continue to oppose the truth that has come to them, they will soon see its evil fate from their very eyes.
>
> Similarly, the Prophet (sws) and his companions are urged to be steadfast and pious: success will ultimately be for the truth they uphold. However, it is God's established practice that the truth triumphs after necessarily passing through various trials and tribulations. If they pass through these phases with perseverance and resolve, they will succeed in this world and in the next, as is stated thus in verse 27 of Sūrah Ibrāhīm: يُثَبِّتُ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ وَيُضِلُّ اللّٰهُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ.[1]

In order to explain this fact, the anecdotes of God's prophets have been mentioned in detail in Sūrah Yūnus and Sūrah Hūd. In the latter *sūrah*, the objective of referring to these anecdotes has been mentioned thus while addressing the Prophet (sws):

وَكُلًّا نَّقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ اَنْۢبَآءِ الرُّسُلِ مَا نُثَبِّتُ بِهٖ فُؤَادَكَ ۚ وَجَآءَكَ فِيْ هٰذِهِ الْحَقُّ وَمَوْعِظَةٌ وَّذِكْرٰى لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَقُلْ لِّلَّذِيْنَ

1. God shall strengthen the believers in this world and in the hereafter through this strong word, and shall not acknowledge the deeds of those who were unjust to their souls.

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لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ اعْمَلُوْا عَلٰى مَكَانَتِكُمْ اِنَّا عٰمِلُوْنَ وَانْتَظِرُوْا اِنَّا مُنْتَظِرُوْنَ. (۱۱: ۱۲۰ -۱۲۲)

And We are narrating to you all that from the accounts of the messengers through which We can strengthen your heart. And the truth has become evident to you in them and there is an advice and a reminder in them for those who believe. And tell those who are not professing faith: Do according to your way; We shall do according to Our way and you also wait; we are also waiting. (11:120-122)

Analysis of Meanings

The purpose of the anecdote mentioned in Sūrah Yūsuf is no different. The only difference is that in the previous *sūrahs*, anecdotes of many prophets were narrated while in this *sūrah* just one anecdote is comprehensively taken up. It has been called "the best anecdote." At the end in verse 90, the summary of this anecdote is stated thus:

اِنَّهٗ مَنْ يَّتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرْ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ. (۱۲: ۹۰)

Indeed, those who fear God and remain steadfast, then God does not waste the reward of those who are thorough.

In other words, after Sūrah Hūd, this *sūrah* corroborates this fact by presenting historical testimony stated in the verses of Sūrah Hūd quoted earlier. Moreover, this is the best of testimonies presented in this best of anecdotes.

The Anecdote of Joseph: Some aspect that make it the Best Anecdote

The fact that the anecdote of Joseph (sws) is the best anecdote viz a viz how a reader finds fodder for his faith and sweetness for his soul in it is quite apparent. However, I would also like to allude to certain aspects about it to guide those who would like to appreciate its finesse.

In my opinion, following are some very significant points that make this the best anecdote:

1. The purpose for which incidents of messengers are mentioned in the Qur'ān that depict their conflict with their nations is to guide and teach the addressees of the Prophet (sws): they should learn a lesson from these past accounts. However, the account of Joseph (sws) in particular mirrors the situations that the Prophet (sws) will face from his adversaries.

Without going into details, I will allude to some important events:

1. Consultations of killing the Prophet (sws) in the Dār al-nadwah and ultimately he remaining secure from these machinations; his hiding in the cave of Thawr and migrating to Madīnah; gaining supremacy in Madīnah in an unparalleled way; believers of his nation migrating to Madīnah and the establishment of a powerful government there; the government reaching its acme and the people of Makkah

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becoming compliant to it; at the conquest of Makkah, the question of the Prophet (sws): "Tell me how I am going to deal with you;" their reply: "You are a benevolent brother and the son of a benevolent brother;" his response: "I will say the same thing to you what Joseph (sws) said to his brothers: "Go you are free. Today there is no blame on you."

While keeping in mind all these incidents, if one studies Sūrah Yūsuf, it seems that each of these incidents has parallels in the anecdote of Joseph (sws).

2. Just as the Prophet (sws) would have seen the present and the past in this mirror, his enemies too – at least the keen ones – would have seen their fate mirrored by this anecdote. It is even possible that the perspicacious among the would have been impacted by it. The fact is that if these teachings would bave been delivered in explicit words, they would have caused more harm than benefit. Subtle accounts have a much more profound effect than explicit pieces of advice.

3. People mostly take a lot of interest in romantic tales and accounts. However, they are generally indecent and immoral. The feature of this tale is that it has the sweetness of beauty and love in it. Yet Joseph (sws) who is the central character of this story comes out as a person in whom purity of character and conduct is personified. Such is the profound nature of this portrayal that the reader finds in it spiritual nourishment for his faith, and joy and ecstasy for his soul. He wants to follow the example set and it. The special thing here is that to follow this conduct of Joseph does not look impossible; it seems to be within reach of people.

4. The events and incidents that take place in this tale are quite amazing but at no place does it seem that anything in them is out of order and sequence or is not in harmony with the natural pace of events. A person's mind spontansouly accepts these details and is influenced, according to his own ability, by its ingrained truth.

5. Joseph (sws) possessed both outward and inner beauty. However, his real beauty became evident through the various trials he passed in the various phases of his life. He comes out as an abiding example of intelligence, truthfulness, purity, chastity and a person who is an embodiment of forgiveness even though he has the power to take revenge.

These are some aspects to which I have alluded here. This does not mean that the wisdom in this tale is confined to these aspccts only. There will be many more pearls of wisdom which we will find while studying it. Explaining them will be more apprpriate at those instances.

With this introduction, I now, with God's help, embark on the exegesis of this *sūrah*.

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Section I: Verses (1-6)

بِسۡمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحۡمٰنِ الرَّحِيۡمِ

الٓرٰ ۚ تِلۡكَ اٰيٰتُ الۡكِتٰبِ الۡمُبِيۡنِ ۙ﴿۱﴾ اِنَّاۤ اَنۡزَلۡنٰهُ قُرۡءٰنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَّعَلَّكُمۡ تَعۡقِلُوۡنَ ﴿۲﴾ نَحۡنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيۡكَ اَحۡسَنَ الۡقَصَصِ بِمَاۤ اَوۡحَيۡنَاۤ اِلَيۡكَ هٰذَا الۡقُرۡاٰنَ ۖ وَاِنۡ كُنۡتَ مِنۡ قَبۡلِهٖ لَمِنَ الۡغٰفِلِيۡنَ ﴿۳﴾ اِذۡ قَالَ يُوۡسُفُ لِاَبِيۡهِ يٰۤاَبَتِ اِنِّىۡ رَاَيۡتُ اَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوۡكَبًا وَّالشَّمۡسَ وَالۡقَمَرَ رَاَيۡتُهُمۡ لِىۡ سٰجِدِيۡنَ ﴿۴﴾ قَالَ يٰبُنَىَّ لَا تَقۡصُصۡ رُءۡيَاكَ عَلٰٓى اِخۡوَتِكَ فَيَكِيۡدُوۡا لَكَ كَيۡدًا ؕ اِنَّ الشَّيۡطٰنَ لِلۡاِنۡسَانِ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِيۡنٌ ﴿۵﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ يَجۡتَبِيۡكَ رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِنۡ تَاۡوِيۡلِ الۡاَحَادِيۡثِ وَيُتِمُّ نِعۡمَتَهٗ عَلَيۡكَ وَعَلٰٓى اٰلِ يَعۡقُوۡبَ كَمَاۤ اَتَمَّهَا عَلٰٓى اَبَوَيۡكَ مِنۡ قَبۡلُ اِبۡرٰهِيۡمَ وَاِسۡحٰقَ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ عَلِيۡمٌ حَكِيۡمٌ ﴿۶﴾

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Ever-Merciful.

This is Alif Lām Rā. These are the verses of a clear Book. We have revealed it as an Arabic Qur'ān so that you can understand it. (1-2)

Through this Qur'ān which We have revealed to you, We shall narrate to you an excellent anecdote. Indeed, before this you were unaware of it. This happened when Joseph said to his father: "Father! I dreamt that there are eleven stars and the sun and the moon. I see them prostrating before me." He replied: "My Son! Do not narrate this dream to your brothers lest they engage in a conspiracy against you. Satan is an open enemy of human beings. And in this way your Lord will bless you and teach you how to reach the core of matters and complete His favour on you and on the clan of Jacob, the way He has completed it on your fathers Abraham and Isaac before this. Indeed, your Lord is All-Knowing, All-Wise." (3-6)

Explanation

الٓرٰ ۚ تِلۡكَ اٰيٰتُ الۡكِتٰبِ الۡمُبِيۡنِ ۙ﴿۱﴾ اِنَّاۤ اَنۡزَلۡنٰهُ قُرۡءٰنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَّعَلَّكُمۡ تَعۡقِلُوۡنَ ﴿۲﴾[2]

Alif Lām Rā is the Qur'ānic name of the *sūrah*. Sūrahs Yūnus and Hūd also have the same name. The real thing in a name is to indentify someone or something by a word. Thus it is not needed to go after its meaning. What is sufficient to know is that *sūrahs* which have names in common will have common meanings and topics. Hence the real topic in each of these three *sūrahs* is the same; however, the nature of

2. This is Alif Lām Rā. These are the verses of a clear Book. We have revealed it as an Arabic Qur'ān so that you can understand it.

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discussion and reasoning is different.

The verse under discussion implies that this book is absolutely clear and lucid in what it states and the argument it provides; everything it presents is evident through indisputable proofs; its style is soothing and effective and removes all doubts and ambiguities in the mind. In other words, this book does not need any external sign or miracle for its veracity, as the disbelievers were demanding. The fact is that arguments as radiant as the sun are found within it that testify to its veracity. The only thing needed is that people open their ears to hear it and are prepared to reflect on it.

The verse addresses the people of Arabia in general and the Quraysh in particular and expresses the favour God has done to them by revealing His book in their own language: hence they should understand it, give it due regard, communicate it to others and also make them understand it. This is one aspect of this book being "clear." Concealed in this word is also a warning for the Quraysh that if they do not duly value it, they will be the most unfortunate. The more it is a boon for them the more it is a bane too for them. They will face punishment if they do not accord importance to it.

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ اَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَآ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ ۖ وَاِنْ كُنْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ لَمِنَ الْغٰفِلِيْنَ ۝[3]

The word قَصَص means "story, tale and anecdote" and is not used as a participle to mean "narrating [something]." If it was used in this meaning, it would not have been defined by the article *alif lām* in accordance with conventional linguistic principles. The construction would have been: اَحْسَنَ قَصَصٍ. Thus the verse means: "We relate to you the best anecdotes" and not "We relate to you in the best of narrative styles." Parallels from the Qur'ān corroborate this. Thus, for example, verse 176 of Sūrah al-A'rāf says: فَاقْصُصِ الْقَصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ (narrate to them the best anecdote). Similarly, verse 25 of Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ states: فَلَمَّا جَآءَهٗ وَ قَصَّ عَلَيْهِ الْقَصَصَ (thus when he came to him and narrated his anecdote to him). In my opinion, the expression اَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ is the same as the one found in verse 23 of Sūrah al-Zumar: اللّٰهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ (God has revealed the best discourse). Another thing that must be kept in mind is that if the word قَصَص is understood as a participle, the grammatical object (*maf'ūl*) disappears; whereas a verb requires an object and in the Qur'ān this verb has always been mentioned with its object.

As for the reason why the anecdotes of Joseph is called the best anecdote, I have already alluded to some of its aspects in the introduction of the *sūrah* and some others will *insha'Allāh* be alluded to at their relevant instances.

The previous verse was addressed in general terms. It carried a warning for the Quraysh, as referred to earlier. In the verse under discussion, the Prophet (sws) is addressed. Deliberation shows that there are two important aspects of this anecdote

3. Through this Qur'ān which We have revealed to you, We shall narrate to you an excellent anecdote. Indeed, before this you were unaware of it.

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which have been made evident before him.

Firstly, it is the best anecdote.

Secondly, it is a very clear proof of his messengerhood.

We have already explained the first of these earlier. If an anecdote is true in itself and also acts as a mirror to its addressees in which they can see the ups and downs of their lives, then no anecdote can be more effective. The anecdote of Joseph (sws) has precisely this status for the Prophet (sws). He could see a glimpse of his present and future in it; there are some very severe instances in it too but the final destination is quite brilliant. In its pathway, though refuge in the cave of Thawr must sought, yet from the darkness of this cave the radiance of obtaining the political ascendancy in Madīnah could also be observed. Moreover, also visible in the hard life of Makkah was a time when its arrogant people would submit to the Prophet's authority.

This anecdote is a proof of the Prophet's messengerhood because he was illiterate regarding religious scriptures. Thus he was neither aware of this anecdote nor had any means of being aware of it. It was because of the Qur'ān that he became cognizant of it and that too in such a true manner and with exact details that even the People of the Book were not cognizant of it to this extent. As such it was a proof of his messengerhood for his own nation as well as for the People of the Book. After all, if he did not receive divine revelation, how else could he have all this information about this anecdote in such a true and comprehensive way? The words "before this" show that if he had known it to any extent before the revelation of the Qur'ān, he would have referred to it one time or the other in the forty years of his existence. Why do not his adversaries think that if this was not the result of divine revelation, how at all could this treasure be known? It may be kept in mind that this anecdote is found in the Torah and the Talmud. However, in the first place, he had no means of knowing it because of his illiteracy. Moreover, at every step, there is a difference between their accounts and that of the Qur'ān. Any person who deliberates on this difference in a fair way will realize that the account of the Qur'ān is very natural and that of the Torah is illogical and unnatural and also against the majesty of the prophetic status.

اِذۡ قَالَ یُوۡسُفُ لِاَبِیۡہِ یٰۤاَبَتِ اِنِّیۡ رَاَیۡتُ اَحَدَ عَشَرَ کَوۡکَبًا وَّ الشَّمۡسَ وَ الۡقَمَرَ رَاَیۡتُہُمۡ لِیۡ سٰجِدِیۡنَ ﴿۴﴾[4]

This is the beginning of the prelude to the actual anecdote.

The fact that Joseph (sws) foremost brought this dream before his father's attention shows his extraordinary uprightness, sincere intention and forthright obedience. If a mean person sees such a dream, he immediately brags about it before others. However, Joseph (sws) was very serious and austere since his childhood. He thought that this was not some wayward dream; it had significance. For this reason, he

4. This happened when Joseph said to his father: "Father! I dreamt that there are eleven stars and the sun and the moon. I see them prostrating before me."

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presented it before his illustrious father the foremost because he fully trusted him.

The humility found in Joseph (sws) becomes fully evident in the way he has narrated his dream. Initially, he just said that he saw eleven stars, the sun and the moon. Then since in the subsequent statement his eminence would be reflected he hesitantly said that he has seen those heavenly bodies prostrating before him. The repetition of the word رَاَيْتُ in the verse has made this hesitancy very evident.

قَالَ يٰبُنَيَّ لَا تَقْصُصْ رُءْيَاكَ عَلٰٓى اِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيْدُوْا لَكَ كَيْدًا ؕ اِنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ لِلْاِنْسَانِ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ ۝5

Jacob (sws) immediately realized that this dream meant that Joseph (sws) would one day be appointed a prophet and for this reason he stopped him from narrating it before his brothers. They may become jealous of him and start conspiring against him.

It may be kept in mind that Joseph (sws) had eleven brothers; out of these, ten were step. Only the youngest – Benjamin – was his real brother.

وَكَذٰلِكَ يَجْتَبِيْكَ رَبُّكَ وَيُعَلِّمُكَ مِنْ تَاْوِيْلِ الْاَحَادِيْثِ وَيُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهٗ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلٰٓى اٰلِ يَعْقُوْبَ كَمَآ اَتَمَّهَا عَلٰٓى اَبَوَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَاِسْحٰقَ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ۝6

As soon as Jacob (sws) heard the dream, he knew that it was a true one because propehthood begins with such true dreams. The apparent nature of the dream showed its true nature and predicted a brilliant future for the one saw it. He knew that soon Joseph (sws) would be blessed with propehthood.

The words "teach you how to reach the core of matters" indicate two things:

First, God himself will make evident to him the reality of this dream. Thus later in the *sūrah* in verses 100-101, it is said:

وَقَالَ يٰٓاَبَتِ هٰذَا تَاْوِيْلُ رُءْيَايَ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۖ قَدْ جَعَلَهَا رَبِّيْ حَقًّا ؕ وَقَدْ اَحْسَنَ بِيْٓ اِذْ اَخْرَجَنِيْ مِنَ السِّجْنِ وَجَآءَ بِكُمْ مِّنَ الْبَدْوِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اَنْ نَّزَغَ الشَّيْطٰنُ بَيْنِيْ وَبَيْنَ اِخْوَتِيْ ؕ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ لَطِيْفٌ لِّمَا يَشَآءُ ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْعَلِيْمُ الْحَكِيْمُ رَبِّ قَدْ اٰتَيْتَنِيْ مِنَ الْمُلْكِ وَعَلَّمْتَنِيْ مِنْ تَاْوِيْلِ الْاَحَادِيْثِ ۚ فَاطِرَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۙ اَنْتَ وَلِيّٖ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ تَوَفَّنِيْ مُسْلِمًا وَّاَلْحِقْنِيْ بِالصّٰلِحِيْنَ. (۱۲: ۱۰۰-۱۰۱)

And Joseph said: "Father! This is the interpretation of my dream that I had seen earlier. My Lord made it a reality. And He very graciously helped me when He

5. He replied: "My Son! Do not narrate this dream to your brothers lest they engage in a conspiracy against you. Satan is an open enemy of human beings.

6. And in this way your Lord will bless you and teach you how to reach the core of matters and complete His favour on you and on the clan of Jacob, the way He has completed it on your fathers Abraham and Isaac before this. Indeed, your Lord is All-Knowing, All-Wise."

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took me out of the prison and brought you here from the village after Satan had spread mischief between me and my brothers. Indeed, whatever my Lord desires, He takes care of it very minutely and thoroughly. Indeed, He alone is Knowledgeable and Wise. Lord! You granted me a share in political authority and also taught me from the knowledge of interpreting words."

Second, the Almighty blesses his prophets with the knack and knowledge of interpreting dreams. This is because dreams are a means of divine revelation in which facts appear in symbolic form and hence need a certain skill to understand and interpret them. When Jacob (sws) realized that this dream was giving glad tidings of prophethood to Joseph (sws), it also simultaneously became evident to him that he would also be blessed with the art of interpreting dreams. As a result of this, he would be able to fully understand what they depict and also fulfil the intent of God. Thus it will be mentioned later in the *sūrah* that God gifted him with such profundity of the knowledge of dream interpretation that it ultimately became the means of acquiring the rule of Egypt for him.

The favour referred to in the verse is that of religion and *sharī'ah*. Other favours in this world are supplementary in nature. It is the favour of religion and *sharī'ah* which completes God's favours

Section II: Verses (7-22)

After the introductory part of the anecdote, from here begins the actual anecdote of Joseph (sws) and his brothers. It was not meant to be narrated for the mere sake of narration: its purpose was to answer many questions about the Prophets' preaching that were arising in the minds of both his companions and his adversaries. For this reason, it began with way it has here. At the end of this section, it is stated that God is fully capable of realizing His scheme but most people do not know this.

Readers may proceed to study these verses in the light of this background.

Text and Translation

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِيْ يُوْسُفَ وَاِخْوَتِهٖٓ اٰيٰتٌ لِّلسَّآىِٕلِيْنَ ۝٧ اِذْ قَالُوْا لَيُوْسُفُ وَاَخُوْهُ اَحَبُّ اِلٰٓى اَبِيْنَا مِنَّا وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ ؕ
اِنَّ اَبَانَا لَفِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنِ ۝٨ اقْتُلُوْا يُوْسُفَ اَوِ اطْرَحُوْهُ اَرْضًا يَّخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهُ اَبِيْكُمْ وَتَكُوْنُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ
قَوْمًا صٰلِحِيْنَ ۝٩ قَالَ قَآىِٕلٌ مِّنْهُمْ لَا تَقْتُلُوْا يُوْسُفَ وَاَلْقُوْهُ فِيْ غَيٰبَتِ الْجُبِّ يَلْتَقِطْهُ بَعْضُ السَّيَّارَةِ اِنْ
كُنْتُمْ فٰعِلِيْنَ ۝١٠ قَالُوْا يٰٓاَبَانَا مَا لَكَ لَا تَاْمَنَّا عَلٰى يُوْسُفَ وَاِنَّا لَهٗ لَنٰصِحُوْنَ ۝١١ اَرْسِلْهُ مَعَنَا غَدًا يَّرْتَعْ وَ
يَلْعَبْ وَاِنَّا لَهٗ لَحٰفِظُوْنَ ۝١٢ قَالَ اِنِّيْ لَيَحْزُنُنِيْٓ اَنْ تَذْهَبُوْا بِهٖ وَاَخَافُ اَنْ يَّاْكُلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَاَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ غٰفِلُوْنَ ۝١٣

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قَالُوْا لَئِنْ اَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ اِنَّآ اِذًا لَّخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ فَلَمَّا ذَهَبُوْا بِهٖ وَاَجْمَعُوْٓا اَنْ يَّجْعَلُوْهُ فِيْ غَيٰبَتِ
الْجُبِّ ۚ وَاَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْهِ لَتُنَبِّئَنَّهُمْ بِاَمْرِهِمْ هٰذَا وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَجَآءُوْٓ اَبَاهُمْ عِشَآءً يَّبْكُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾
قَالُوْا يٰٓاَبَانَآ اِنَّا ذَهَبْنَا نَسْتَبِقُ وَتَرَكْنَا يُوْسُفَ عِنْدَ مَتَاعِنَا فَاَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ ۚ وَمَآ اَنْتَ بِمُؤْمِنٍ لَّنَا وَلَوْ كُنَّا
صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَجَآءُوْ عَلٰى قَمِيْصِهٖ بِدَمٍ كَذِبٍ ۭ قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ اَنْفُسُكُمْ اَمْرًا ۭ فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيْلٌ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ
عَلٰي مَا تَصِفُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَجَآءَتْ سَيَّارَةٌ فَاَرْسَلُوْا وَارِدَهُمْ فَاَدْلٰى دَلْوَهٗ ۭ قَالَ يٰبُشْرٰى هٰذَا غُلٰمٌ ۭ وَاَسَرُّوْهُ بِضَاعَةً ۭ وَ
اللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِمَا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَشَرَوْهُ بِثَمَنٍۢ بَخْسٍ دَرَاهِمَ مَعْدُوْدَةٍ ۚ وَكَانُوْا فِيْهِ مِنَ الزّٰهِدِيْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَقَالَ
الَّذِي اشْتَرٰىهُ مِنْ مِّصْرَ لِامْرَاَتِهٖٓ اَكْرِمِيْ مَثْوٰىهُ عَسٰٓى اَنْ يَّنْفَعَنَآ اَوْ نَتَّخِذَهٗ وَلَدًا ۭ وَكَذٰلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوْسُفَ فِي
الْاَرْضِ ۡ وَلِنُعَلِّمَهٗ مِنْ تَاْوِيْلِ الْاَحَادِيْثِ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ غَالِبٌ عَلٰٓى اَمْرِهٖ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَلَمَّا
بَلَغَ اَشُدَّهٗٓ اٰتَيْنٰهُ حُكْمًا وَّعِلْمًا ۭ وَكَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾

Indeed there are many signs in the anecdote of Joseph and his brothers for those who ask. Bear in mind when they said: "Joseph and his brother are dearer to our father than us even though we are a full group. Indeed, our father is afflicted with a blatant error. Kill Joseph or throw him at some place; as a result, your father's attention will be totally focused towards you and after this you will become full well." A speaker from among them spoke: "Do not kill Joseph. If you must, throw him at the bottom of a well; some passing by caravan will pull him out and take him away." (7-10)

They said to their father: "Why is it father that you do not trust us in the matter of Joseph, even though we are his sincere well-wishers. Let him go along with us tomorrow that he may enjoy and play a little and we shall be responsible for his full safety." The father replied: "It grieves me that you take him away and I fear that a wolf may eat him while you are unaware." They replied: "If a wolf eats him when we are a full group, then surely we shall be in great loss." (11-14)

So, when they took away Joseph and decided to throw him in the bottom of a well and We also sent a revelation to him: "You will inform them of this misdeed when they will not even be aware," and they came weeping and wailing to their father at nightfall. They then said: "Father! While racing with one another, we went far away and left Joseph with our belongings; so, a wolf devoured him – And you will not believe us even though we may be truthful." And they even brought Joseph's shirt stained with fake blood. The father said: "In fact, it is your heart that has forged a lie for you. So, let graceful patience be my way and on whatever you are saying, God alone is the support." (15-18)

And a caravan arrived. So, they sent its water-bearer. He slid down his bucket; then

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cried out: "Glad tidings be delivered; this is a boy." And they secured him thinking him to be a prized possession. And God was fully aware of whatever they were doing. And they sold him for a paltry price of a few *dirhams* and they had no interest in his matter. (19-20)

And from among the people of Egypt, the one who bought him said to this wife: "Treat him well; hopefully, he will give us benefit or we can even make him our son." And in this way, We paved the way for Joseph in the land in order to choose him and in order to teach him the interpretation of things. And God is One who implements His will come what may but most people know not. And when he reached his mature age, We gave Him political authority and knowledge. And, in this way, do We reward those who are thorough. (21-22)

Explanation

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِيْ يُوْسُفَ وَاِخْوَتِهٖٓ اٰيٰتٌ لِّلسَّآئِلِيْنَ ۝[7]

This verse sounds a warning before the narration of the actual anecdote, as pointed out earlier: the addressees must not regard it a mere story; in fact, there are many questions concealed in it which in that time of the preaching mission of the Prophet (sws) were arising in the minds of his companions as well as his adversaries.

In this chapter of the Qur'ān, the topic of the dominance of the truth and humiliation of falsehood has been mentioned in various styles. When this topic was brought up for discussion, the darkness of disbelief had enveloped the whole land of Arabia. It was not easy to imagine that one day this darkness would vanish and that person who at that time was being persecuted and oppressed along with his companions would one day see these adversaries submitting to him and begging him for mercy. In order to bring to mind this picture, the Qur'ān has narrated this anecdote. The purpose was to remove all doubts in this regard that existed or could have come into the minds of people and so that people know that God's majesty manifests itself in this way too and all his projects and intentions materialize.

اِذْ قَالُوْا لَيُوْسُفُ وَاَخُوْهُ اَحَبُّ اِلٰٓى اَبِيْنَا مِنَّا وَنَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ ؕ اِنَّ اَبَانَا لَفِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنِ ۝[8]

The word عُصْبَةٌ means "a group" and "a faction" especially one which is formed from blood relations and thus is cohesive. In nomadic and tribal cultures where there was no concept of an organized state, a tribe and family would depend on its own strength for its support and defence. The most respectable and influential family would be one who had the most youth in it for these tasks. It was such a family that

7. Indeed there are many signs in the anecdote of Joseph and his brothers for those who ask.

8. Bear in mind when they said: "Joseph and his brother are dearer to our father than us even though we are a full group. Indeed, our father is afflicted with a blatant error."

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would assume the leadership of their tribe or nation and would rule. It was on the basis of this bias that the brothers of Joseph (sws) expressed anger at the naivety and lack of farsightedness of their father: they reckoned that it was because of them that their faction and group existed; it was they who provided this support and defence and secure their dominance over others; yet their father holds Joseph (sws) and Benjamin dearer to him and what more a mistake can be imagined than this.

اقْتُلُوْا يُوْسُفَ اَوِ اطْرَحُوْهُ اَرْضًا يَّخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهُ اَبِيْكُمْ وَ تَكُوْنُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ قَوْمًا صٰلِحِيْنَ ۝۹[9]

The word صالح here is used in its literal meaning. The expression صلحت حال فلان would mean "his state of affairs became well, his worries disappeared and the discomfort of the heart went away."

The verse points to the scheme plotted by the brothers of Joseph (sws).

Some people interpret the sentence وَ تَكُوْنُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ قَوْمًا صٰلِحِيْنَ to mean that once they commit the crime, they should become pious again; however, this interpretation is not possible in any way. Not withstanding other facts, the construction of the sentence is not appropriate for this meaning. It is coordinated to the answer of the question cited just before and hence its interpretation should be understood to be subsumed under it.

It is clearly evident from this mutual consultation between the brothers' of Joseph (sws) was that it was he who they had great spite for. The real cause of this spite was not because he was their step brother but because of his high qualities that were becoming prominent from that age, and it was as a result of these qualities that Jacob (sws) felt great love for him. Had the cause merely being his step relation with them, why did they not also plot to kill Benjamin?

قَالَ قَآئِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ لَا تَقْتُلُوْا يُوْسُفَ وَ اَلْقُوْهُ فِيْ غَيٰبَتِ الْجُبِّ يَلْتَقِطْهُ بَعْضُ السَّيَّارَةِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ فٰعِلِيْنَ ۝۱۰[10]

The word غيابــة means "the bottom of a well" and جبّ means "a well." Such wells were common in desert pathway where caravans would pass by. In general circumstances, they would fall in disuse but when a caravan would pass by them, they would become a hub of activity.

It may well be that the suggestion given by one of the brothers was because in those times slaves were sold in the market. He may have thought that either the caravan goers would make Joseph (sws) their slave or sell him in the city. In this way, his life would be saved and the issue at hand would also be resolved. Finally, everyone agreed on this suggestion.

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9. "Kill Joseph or throw him at some place; as a result, your father's attention will be totally focused towards you and after this you will become full well."

10. A speaker from among them spoke: "Do not kill Joseph. If you must, throw him at the bottom of a well; some passing by caravan will pull him out and take him away."

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قَالُوْا يٰٓاَبَانَا مَا لَكَ لَا تَاْمَنَّا عَلٰى يُوْسُفَ وَ اِنَّا لَهٗ لَنٰصِحُوْنَ ﴿۱۱﴾ اَرْسِلْهُ مَعَنَا غَدًا يَّرْتَعْ وَ يَلْعَبْ وَ اِنَّا لَهٗ لَحٰفِظُوْنَ ﴿۱۲﴾[11]

The expression يَّرْتَعْ وَيَلْعَبْ means "to eat and play." However, it very subtly signifies a picnic. In ancient rural societies, this was a very popular means of entertainment. Classical Arab poets mention this in a very interesting way in their odes. Joseph's brothers after agreeing on the aforementioned scheme tried to deceive Jacob (sws) by making usye of this means of entertainment.

قَالَ اِنِّيْ لَيَحْزُنُنِيْٓ اَنْ تَذْهَبُوْا بِهٖ وَ اَخَافُ اَنْ يَّاْكُلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَ اَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ غٰفِلُوْنَ ﴿۱۳﴾ قَالُوْا لَئِنْ اَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَ نَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ اِنَّآ اِذًا لَّخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿۱۴﴾[12]

It is evident from this verse that a lot of wolves were found in the adjoining areas and they used to attack people at various occasions.

It is evident that after being given assurance, Jacob (sws) rather unwillingly allowed them to take along Joseph (sws) with them.

فَلَمَّا ذَهَبُوْا بِهٖ وَ اَجْمَعُوْٓا اَنْ يَّجْعَلُوْهُ فِيْ غَيٰبَتِ الْجُبِّ ۚ وَ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْهِ لَتُنَبِّئَنَّهُمْ بِاَمْرِهِمْ هٰذَا وَ هُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿۱۵﴾ وَ جَآءُوْٓ اَبَاهُمْ عِشَآءً يَّبْكُوْنَ ﴿۱۶﴾ قَالُوْا يٰٓاَبَانَآ اِنَّا ذَهَبْنَا نَسْتَبِقُ وَ تَرَكْنَا يُوْسُفَ عِنْدَ مَتَاعِنَا فَاَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ ۚ وَ مَآ اَنْتَ بِمُؤْمِنٍ لَّنَا وَ لَوْ كُنَّا صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿۱۷﴾[13]

The important thing to note in these verses is that the answer of the conditional particle لَمَّا is قَالُوْا يٰٓاَبَانَآ. In order to comprehensively state the whole scenario many things are subsumed under this conditional particle. This brevity helps in alluding to all parts of the anecdote while at the same time not distracting the reader from the real point at hand.

It is evident from these verses that there existed a difference of opinion among the brothers of Joseph (sws) about killing him or throwing him in the well. However,

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11. They said to their father: "Why is it father that you do not trust us in the matter of Joseph, even though we are his sincere well-wishers. Let him go along with us tomorrow that he may enjoy and play a little and we shall be responsible for his full safety."

12. The father replied: "It grieves me that you take him away and I fear that a wolf may eat him while you are unaware." They replied: "If a wolf eats him when we are a full group, then surely we shall be in great loss."

13. So, when they took away Joseph and decided to throw him in the bottom of a well and We also sent a revelation to him: "You will inform them of this misdeed when they will not even be aware," and they came weeping and wailing to their father at nightfall. They then said: "Father! While racing with one another, we went far away and left Joseph with our belongings; so, a wolf devoured him – And you will not believe us even though we may be truthful."

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finally the latter option prevailed.

The word "revelation" here does not refer to its meaning as a term. It means to implant a thought in the heart. When the upright face trials and hardship at the hands of the wrongdoers and the miscreants, just as the Almighty gives respite to the latter he also sounds assurance and glad tidings to the former. Almost everyone who has the good fortune of passing through the trials for the cause of God experiences this. Such is the nature of this assurance that a person becomes very strong and does not give the slightest weight to these hardships. Joseph (sws) was implanted with the thought that this trial would be temporary. Time will come when he will inform his brothers about their evil deed. At that time, he would be at such a position in status that these brothers would not be able to recognize him. Verse 90 ahead gives details.

The reason that the brothers came back late in the night probably was to rule out any chance of going in search of him if the father wanted.

The word إستباق means competing against one another in a race. In a succeeding verse, the phrase إِسْتَبَقَ البَابَ is used implying that both ran towards the door.

The excuse presented by the brothers was a rather poor one and did nor reflect any intelligence in it. They thought that since Jacob (sws) was already afraid of a wolf, they may as well use it in their excuse. When they presented this excuse, they themselves were not very convinced that Jacob (sws) would accept it. Hence their words: "and you will not believe us even though we may be truthful."

وَجَآءُوْ عَلٰى قَمِيْصِهٖ بِدَمٍ كَذِبٍ ؕ قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ اَنْفُسُكُمْ اَمْرًا ؕ فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيْلٌ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلٰى مَا تَصِفُوْنَ ﴿۱۸﴾[14]

The expression سولت له نفسه كذا means "Satan seem a certain thing seem fair to them as well as very acceptable too" (زينت له وسهلته له وهّونته).

The expression صَبْرٌ جَمِيْلٌ can be a *mubtadā'* (inchoative) whose *khabar* (enunciative) is been suppressed becaue the undefined noun when qualified by an adjective has the ability to become a defined noun. The expression can also be the *khabar* (enunciative) of a suppressed *mubtadā'* (inchoative). I have preferred the first of these. The reason that the *khabar* is suppressed on such occasions is to focus the attention of the reader to the real point.

This patience referred to is one that does not have any element of complaint, grumbling and wailing in it.

If someone wants to see the difference between the accounts of the Qur'ān and the Torah, just this one occasion is enough. The words in the Torah are: Then Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days (Genesis: 37:34)

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14. And they even brought Joseph's shirt stained with fake blood. The father said: "In fact, it is your heart that has forged a lie for you. So, let graceful patience be my way and on whatever you are saying, God alone is the support."

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وَجَآءَتْ سَيَّارَةٌ فَاَرْسَلُوْا وَارِدَهُمْ فَاَدْلٰى دَلْوَهٗ ؕ قَالَ يٰبُشْرٰى هٰذَا غُلٰمٌ ؕ وَاَسَرُّوْهُ بِضَاعَةً ؕ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِمَا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿۱۹﴾[15]

The actual meaning of the word وَارِد is someone who steps into a fountain or a spring. However, here it is used for the person who was deputed by the people of the caravan to arrange for water. Here it is used in this meaning.

Slave trading was common in those days and the people of the caravan thought of selling Joseph (sws). They also tried to conceal their plan lest others may clay claim to him. While they were planning their scheme, God was planning His. They thought they would earn some money from a slave, while God was paving the way for Joseph (sws) to become the king of Egypt.

وَشَرَوْهُ بِثَمَنٍۭ بَخْسٍ دَرَاهِمَ مَعْدُوْدَةٍ ۚ وَكَانُوْا فِيْهِ مِنَ الزّٰهِدِيْنَ ﴿۲۰﴾[16]

The word شری is used for both buying and selling. Here it is used in the latter sense. بَخْس means something defective and trivial.

The expression زھد فی الشی means رغب عنه و ترکه (he became disinterested in it and forsook it.) A person who has forsaken the world is called زاھد for this very reason.

The brothers' of Joseph (sws) had not spent anything on him and hence were not interested in earning more profit on this sale. What is obtained free always earns a profit regardless of the selling price. It was thus quite probable that they sold him to the first buyer that came to them at whatever price he named. Little did they know that the person they are selling was from the illustrious family of Jacob (sws) and God's prophet and would very soon become the real authority in Egypt. Their disinterest was the natural consequence of this ignorance about who Joseph (sws) actually was.

وَقَالَ الَّذِى اشْتَرٰىهُ مِنْ مِّصْرَ لِامْرَاَتِهٖٓ اَكْرِمِىْ مَثْوٰىهُ عَسٰٓى اَنْ يَّنْفَعَنَآ اَوْ نَتَّخِذَهٗ وَلَدًا ؕ وَكَذٰلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوْسُفَ فِى الْاَرْضِ ۙ وَلِنُعَلِّمَهٗ مِنْ تَاْوِيْلِ الْاَحَادِيْثِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ غَالِبٌ عَلٰٓى اَمْرِهٖ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۲۱﴾[17]

There is a syntactical question in this verse: the co-ordinated clause of وَلِنُعَلِّمَهٗ (and in order to teach him) is not found in the verse. The reason for this suppression is that it is so evident that it does not need mention. It can be easily understood through

15. And a caravan arrived. So, they sent its water-bearer. He slid down his bucket; then cried out: "Glad tidings be delivered; this is a boy." And they secured him thinking him to be a prized possession. And God was fully aware of whatever they were doing.

16. And they sold him for a paltry price of a few *dirhams* and they had no interest in his matter.

17. And from among the people of Egypt, the one who bought him said to this wife: "Treat him well; hopefully, he will give us benefit or we can even make him our son." And in this way, We paved the way for Joseph in the land in order to choose him and in order to teach him the interpretation of things. And God is One who implements His will come what may but most people know not.

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concomitant indications and a whole sentence can be understood to have been suppressed there which actually fills the vacuum created.

In my opinion, before وَلِنُعَلِّمَهٗ, the word لِنَجْتَبِيْهِ (in order to choose him) is suppressed and the particle of co-ordination و (and) points to it. The complete sentence can be seen in the translation.

From here begins a new chapter in the life of Joseph (sws). The Egyptian who bought him seemed to be a designated official of the government and was a high official of the royal guards and a very decent person. It is evident from the Torah that as soon as he saw Joseph (sws), he understood that he was not a slave but the offspring of a noble family who for some reason had fallen into the hands of the sellers. It further seems that until that time he was issueless and thus thought that if the boy fulfilled his expectations, he would adopt him as a son. In this way, he made Joseph (sws) the in charge of his house, as is evident from the Bible.

The words "and God is One who implements His will come what may but most people know not" sum the anecdote of Joseph (sws) thus far narrated. It may be kept in mind that it is being narrated to the Quraysh and this last stance is meant to jolt them: if they want they can see their own future in this anecdote and that of that prophet too against whom they plotting schemes day and night.

وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ اَشُدَّهٗٓ اٰتَيْنٰهُ حُكْمًا وَّعِلْمًا ؕ وَكَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِى الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿۲۲﴾[18]

This verse refers to God's favour and gift for Joseph (sws). The word اَشُدَّ is used both for youth as well as for mature age. The latter usage can be see in verse 15 of Sūrah al-Aḥqāf: حَتّٰٓى اِذَا بَلَغَ اَشُدَّهٗ وَبَلَغَ اَرْبَعِيْنَ سَنَةً.[19]

The words حُكْمًا وَّعِلْمًا here signify prophethood. The first of them means the power of decision-making as well as political authority and both were bestowed on Joseph (sws). The word عِلْم means the knowledge given to prophets through divine revelation.

At end of the verse, the reason why Joseph (sws) was blessed with this gift has been stated: he understood his rights and obligations to God and passed every test. As a result, God appointed him a prophet.

Section III: Verses (23-34)

As soon as the first phase of Joseph's test ended, the second one began. The first phase depicted the jealousy of the brothers and their hate and enmity with him. This resulted in their throwing him in the well. The second phase began with the wife of

18. And when he reached his mature age, We gave Him political authority and knowledge. And, in this way, do We reward those who are thorough.

19. So that when he grows to manhood and attains his fortieth year,

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Egyptian official enticing him with her love. This resulted in him being confined to the jail without any reason. However, just a he passed the first test, he was given grand success by God in this second phase too.

Readers may now proceed to study the verses.

Text and Translation

وَرَاوَدَتْهُ الَّتِيْ هُوَ فِيْ بَيْتِهَا عَنْ نَّفْسِهٖ وَغَلَّقَتِ الْاَبْوَابَ وَقَالَتْ هَيْتَ لَكَ ؕ قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللّٰهِ اِنَّهٗ رَبِّيْٓ اَحْسَنَ
مَثْوَايَ ؕ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿۲۳﴾ وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهٖ ۚ وَهَمَّ بِهَا لَوْلَآ اَنْ رَّاٰ بُرْهَانَ رَبِّهٖ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ لِنَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ السُّوْٓءَ
وَالْفَحْشَآءَ ؕ اِنَّهٗ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ ﴿۲۴﴾ وَاسْتَبَقَا الْبَابَ وَقَدَّتْ قَمِيْصَهٗ مِنْ دُبُرٍ وَّاَلْفَيَا سَيِّدَهَا لَدَا
الْبَابِ ؕ قَالَتْ مَا جَزَآءُ مَنْ اَرَادَ بِاَهْلِكَ سُوْٓءًا اِلَّآ اَنْ يُّسْجَنَ اَوْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿۲۵﴾ قَالَ هِيَ رَاوَدَتْنِيْ عَنْ نَّفْسِيْ وَ
شَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْ اَهْلِهَا ۚ اِنْ كَانَ قَمِيْصُهٗ قُدَّ مِنْ قُبُلٍ فَصَدَقَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الْكٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿۲۶﴾ وَاِنْ كَانَ قَمِيْصُهٗ قُدَّ
مِنْ دُبُرٍ فَكَذَبَتْ وَهُوَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿۲۷﴾ فَلَمَّا رَاٰ قَمِيْصَهٗ قُدَّ مِنْ دُبُرٍ قَالَ اِنَّهٗ مِنْ كَيْدِكُنَّ ؕ اِنَّ كَيْدَكُنَّ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿۲۸﴾
يُوْسُفُ اَعْرِضْ عَنْ هٰذَا ۚ وَاسْتَغْفِرِيْ لِذَنْۢبِكِ ۖ اِنَّكِ كُنْتِ مِنَ الْخٰطِـِٕيْنَ ﴿۲۹﴾ وَقَالَ نِسْوَةٌ فِي الْمَدِيْنَةِ امْرَاَتُ
الْعَزِيْزِ تُرَاوِدُ فَتٰىهَا عَنْ نَّفْسِهٖ ۚ قَدْ شَغَفَهَا حُبًّا ؕ اِنَّا لَنَرٰىهَا فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿۳۰﴾ فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتْ بِمَكْرِهِنَّ
اَرْسَلَتْ اِلَيْهِنَّ وَاَعْتَدَتْ لَهُنَّ مُتَّكَاً وَّاٰتَتْ كُلَّ وَاحِدَةٍ مِّنْهُنَّ سِكِّيْنًا وَّقَالَتِ اخْرُجْ عَلَيْهِنَّ ۚ فَلَمَّا رَاَيْنَهٗٓ
اَكْبَرْنَهٗ وَقَطَّعْنَ اَيْدِيَهُنَّ وَقُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلّٰهِ مَا هٰذَا بَشَرًا ؕ اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيْمٌ ﴿۳۱﴾ قَالَتْ فَذٰلِكُنَّ الَّذِيْ
لُمْتُنَّنِيْ فِيْهِ ؕ وَلَقَدْ رَاوَدْتُّهٗ عَنْ نَّفْسِهٖ فَاسْتَعْصَمَ ؕ وَلَئِنْ لَّمْ يَفْعَلْ مَآ اٰمُرُهٗ لَيُسْجَنَنَّ وَلَيَكُوْنًا مِّنَ الصّٰغِرِيْنَ ﴿۳۲﴾
قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ اَحَبُّ اِلَيَّ مِمَّا يَدْعُوْنَنِيْٓ اِلَيْهِ ۚ وَاِلَّا تَصْرِفْ عَنِّيْ كَيْدَهُنَّ اَصْبُ اِلَيْهِنَّ وَاَكُنْ مِّنَ الْجٰهِلِيْنَ ﴿۳۳﴾
فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهٗ رَبُّهٗ فَصَرَفَ عَنْهُ كَيْدَهُنَّ ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿۳۴﴾

And the woman in whose house he resided began tempting him. And she bolted the doors and said: “Come now.” He said: “God forbid! He is my master. He has treated me well. Unjust people never prosper.” And the woman had decided for him; he too would have succumbed to her had he not seen the clear sign of His Lord,. Thus did We do to keep away vice and wantonness from him. Indeed, he was from among Our chosen people. (23-24)

And both of them rushed to the door and she tore his shirt from the back. And both of them found her husband at the door. She said: “What else can be the punishment of that person who intends evil with your wife than to imprison him or that he suffer some painful punishment?” He said: “It is she who tried to entice me.” And a person

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from the family of the woman bore evidence that if his shirt is torn from the front, then she is telling the truth and he is lying and if his shirt is torn from the back, then she is lying and he is telling the truth. Then when he saw that Joseph's shirt was torn from the back, he cried out: "This is indeed your deception and your deceptions are very testing. Joseph, leave aside this matter and O you woman! Seek repentance for your sin. Indeed, you are the wrongdoer." (25-29)

And some women of the city said: "The wife of 'Azīz is trying to tempt her servant. She is madly in love with him. We see her inflicted with open foolishness." So, when she heard of their intrigue, she sent for them and arranged a place of gathering for them and gave a knife to each of them and asked Joseph: "Come before them." So, when they saw him, they were wonderstruck by his majesty and they injured their hands and cried out: "God forbid, this is not a human being; this is some divine angel." She said: "Is it he about whom you were censuring me? Indeed, I tried to tempt him but he could not be lured. If he does do what I am asking him to do, he shall certainly go to prison and be humiliated." He prayed: "Lord! The prison is dearer to me than what they are inviting me to. And if you now do not drive away their intrigue from me, I shall be inclined towards them and shall become among those who are overwhelmed with emotions." So, his Lord accepted his prayer and warded off their intrigue from him. Indeed, He hears and knows all. (30-34)

Explanation

وَرَاوَدَتْهُ الَّتِيْ هُوَ فِيْ بَيْتِهَا عَنْ نَّفْسِهٖ وَغَلَّقَتِ الْاَبْوَابَ وَقَالَتْ هَيْتَ لَكَ ؕ قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللّٰهِ اِنَّهٗ رَبِّيْٓ اَحْسَنَ مَثْوَايَ ؕ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿۲۳﴾[20]

The expression وَرَاوَدَتْهُ عَنْ نَّفْسِهٖ means that she tried to deceive him into adultery.

The words هَيْتَ لَكَ mean هلم لك وتعال (come forth)

The word رَبّ here is used in its general literal meaning of master and owner. In subsequent verses (41 and 42), it is also used in this meaning: اَمَّآ اَحَدُكُمَا فَيَسْقِيْ رَبَّهٗ خَمْرًا (one of you will serve wine to his master); اذْكُرْنِيْ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ (mention me before your master).

I have referred to earlier that from here begins a new phase in the life of Joseph (sws). Until then, he had been a victim of hate and jealousy. Once he was able to save himself from this, the lasso of love and lust tried to grip him and this trial was far tougher than the previous one.

A deliberation on the sentence uttered by Joseph (sws) shows that there is great psychological eloquence in it. Reminding a woman of God and the Hereafter when she had no conception of them and that too at a time at which she had become blinded by

20. And the woman in whose house he resided began tempting him. And she bolted the doors and said: "Come now." He said: "God forbid! He is my master. He has treated me well. Unjust people never prosper."

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emotions was like casting pearls before a swine. If anything could have allayed her frenzy it could only have been this sentence uttered by Joseph (sws). Had she the slightest semblance of decency in her, she would definitely have thought that there was a young man who had been deeply moved by a small act of kindness of his master; he had so much regard for him that in spite of her immense luring he was not willing to be unfaithful to him and regarded it to be devastating for the Herein as well as the Hereafter. On the other hand, there was she who was his wife and had consigned herself to him in marriage and made her the master of her chastity; she was the queen of her house and used his means and resources; yet such was the extent of her unfaithfulness that in the frenzy of lust she was inviting his slave to marital infidelity.

Some exegetes opine that the antecedent of the accusative pronoun in اِنَّهٗ رَبِّیْٓ is God. However, this is over-stretching the mind. The context does not support it. Thus expressions such as رب المال (owner of wealth), رب البیت (owner of the house) and رب الدار (master of the house) are very common in Arabic and readers have seen that earlier Joseph has used the word رب for his master. There are many words in a language that are used both for God and for people, but in both cases, their meanings change.

وَلَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهٖ ۚ وَهَمَّ بِهَا لَوْلَآ اَنْ رَّاٰ بُرْهَانَ رَبِّهٖ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ لِنَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ السُّوْٓءَ وَالْفَحْشَآءَ ؕ اِنَّهٗ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ ﴿۲۴﴾[21]

"The clear sign" here refers to the divine spark which is innately found in every human being. It is the means of distinguishing between good and evil and also urges human beings to goodness and stops them from evil. It is the established practice of God that it becomes ever stronger in those who duly value it and accept its guidance. For them, it becomes so strong that on tempting occasions it protects them from the onslaughts of their evil desires and the temptations of Satan. On the other hand, it gradually becomes weak and ultimately is even extinguished in people who do not duly value it and contine to disregard its guidance. Darkness engulfs them which deprives them of insight and makes them lose their moral sensitivity. About such people, verse 14 of Sūrah al-Muṭaffifīn states: كَلَّا ۬ بَلْ ۜ رَانَ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ.[22]

Joseph (sws) was among those who valued this divine spark. As a result, he was rewarded on the precarious occasion referred to by the verse from being enticed by the woman. The spark saved him from being engulfed in the darkness of Satanic luring and his own internal desires. The words of the verse clearly say that the woman blindly went after him and offered herself to him. Joseph (sws) too was young at that time. He must be around 18-20 years. It may well have been that he succumb to this enticement. But this was not to be. He had that divine spark in him whose guidance he

21. And the woman had decided for him; he too would have succumbed to her had he not seen the clear sign of His Lord,. Thus did We do to keep away vice and wantonness from him. Indeed, he was from among Our chosen people.

22. Certainly not! In fact, the rust of their deeds has settled on their hearts.

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never disregarded. It was on this occasion that it dazzled in his inner being and immediately the darkness before his eyes disappeared.

The word بُرْهَان is used for clear proof and conclusive argument. What proof can be more clear and conclusive than the one which resounds from a person's inner-self?

Some aspects of the infallibility of prophets also become evident from this verse. First, God protects them from sins even before they are appointed as prophets. Second, this infallibility does not mean that a prophet does not have the potential to commit sins; on the contrary, it means that they continue to protect their divine spark found in their nature. For this reason, it gradually becomes so strong that it does not let them go astray in the greatest of trials.

وَ اسْتَبَقَا الْبَابَ وَ قَدَّتْ قَمِيْصَهٗ مِنْ دُبُرٍ وَّ اَلْفَيَا سَيِّدَهَا لَدَا الْبَابِ ؕ قَالَتْ مَا جَزَآءُ مَنْ اَرَادَ بِاَهْلِكَ سُوْٓءًا اِلَّاۤ اَنْ يُّسْجَنَ اَوْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿۲۵﴾[23]

The word إستباق means to try and outdo one another in a race.

In the scenario depicted in the verse, the woman tried to absolve herself in the eyes of her husband of any wrongdoing and prove that Joseph (sws) was the real culprit.

قَالَ هِيَ رَاوَدَتْنِيْ عَنْ نَّفْسِيْ وَ شَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْ اَهْلِهَا ۚ اِنْ كَانَ قَمِيْصُهٗ قُدَّ مِنْ قُبُلٍ فَصَدَقَتْ وَ هُوَ مِنَ الْكٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿۲۶﴾ وَ اِنْ كَانَ قَمِيْصُهٗ قُدَّ مِنْ دُبُرٍ فَكَذَبَتْ وَ هُوَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿۲۷﴾ فَلَمَّا رَاٰ قَمِيْصَهٗ قُدَّ مِنْ دُبُرٍ قَالَ اِنَّهٗ مِنْ كَيْدِكُنَّ ؕ اِنَّ كَيْدَكُنَّ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿۲۸﴾[24]

It is evident from these verses that news of the whole incident spread in the family with all its details. It assumed the form of a case. Joseph (sws) and the woman had different versions of it. Who was telling the truth? If any circumstantial evidence could be helpful in resolving the dispute, it was the torn shirt of Joseph (sws).

The plural pronoun in كَيْدَكُنَّ expresses the intensity of a man's anger. It is as if this act of the woman not only made her but the whole female species deceivers and loathsome in the eyes of her husband

23. And both of them rushed to the door and she tore his shirt from the back. And both of them found her husband at the door. She said: "What else can be the punishment of that person who intends evil with your wife than to imprison him or that he suffer some painful punishment?"

24. He said: "It is she who tried to entice me." And a person from the family of the woman bore evidence that if his shirt is torn from the front, then she is telling the truth and he is lying and if his shirt is torn from the back, then she is lying and he is telling the truth. Then when he saw that Joseph's shirt was torn from the back, he cried out: "This is indeed your deception and your deceptions are very testing."

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يُوْسُفُ اَعْرِضْ عَنْ هٰذَا وَاسْتَغْفِرِيْ لِذَنْۢبِكِ ۚ اِنَّكِ كُنْتِ مِنَ الْخٰطِـِٕيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾[25]

It may be kept in mind here that repentance held great importance in polytheistic religions as well.

وَقَالَ نِسْوَةٌ فِي الْمَدِيْنَةِ امْرَاَتُ الْعَزِيْزِ تُرَاوِدُ فَتٰىهَا عَنْ نَّفْسِهٖ ۚ قَدْ شَغَفَهَا حُبًّا ؕ اِنَّا لَنَرٰىهَا فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٣٠﴾[26]

The word ‘Azīz (عَزِيْز) means someone who is dominant and powerful. It is used for the king as well as for high-ranking powerful officials of the country. Since this person was high ranking officer among the royal body guards, the women of her elite class used this word for him.

The last sentence uttered by these women have many elements of rebuke, callousness and challenge in it. It meant that in the first place it is strange that the wife of a high-ranking official should stoop so low as to go after the slave of her husband. An even stranger thing is that she is not even successful in luring him to herself. It is from here that within this rebuke another element is added: how foolish is this woman because this matter not only brought her into disrepute but also showed that she was a loser. The implication being that had they been in her place, they would enticed Joseph (sws) in one blow and all his purity would have been dashed to the ground.

فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتْ بِمَكْرِهِنَّ اَرْسَلَتْ اِلَيْهِنَّ وَاَعْتَدَتْ لَهُنَّ مُتَّكَاً وَّاٰتَتْ كُلَّ وَاحِدَةٍ مِّنْهُنَّ سِكِّيْنًا وَّقَالَتِ اخْرُجْ عَلَيْهِنَّ ۚ فَلَمَّا رَاَيْنَهٗۤ اَكْبَرْنَهٗ وَقَطَّعْنَ اَيْدِيَهُنَّ وَقُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلّٰهِ مَا هٰذَا بَشَرًا ؕ اِنْ هٰذَاۤ اِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيْمٌ ﴿٣١﴾[27]

The comments of the ladies really hurt the wife of ‘Azīz. When she saw that they were very proud of their own status and luring, she arranged a gathering, as is specified in the verse. When they came, she handed them knives to cut the fruit. After that she called Joseph (sws) to their presence. The women were wonderstruck at his radiant countenance, shinning forehead and noble face. Loftiness of character and conduct is a very attractive feature in a person and when it is found in a burly young man who is also very handsome, his attractiveness becomes manifold. These women experienced precisely these feelings. They thought they would be facing a young slave who they could easily tempt. But they instead saw someone who was an embodiment of beauty

25. “Joseph, leave aside this matter and O you woman! Seek repentance for your sin. Indeed, you are the wrongdoer.”

26. And some women of the city said: “The wife of ‘Azīz is trying to tempt her servant. She is madly in love with him. We see her inflicted with open foolishness.”

27. So, when she heard of their intrigue, she sent for them and arranged a place of gathering for them and gave a knife to each of them and asked Joseph: “Come before them.” So, when they saw him, they were wonderstruck by his majesty and they injured their hands and cried out: “God forbid, this is not a human being; this is some divine angel.”

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and purity. Seeing him made them realize they would not be able to suceed in enticing this angelic being. However, they had to do something because they had come with great pomp, challenge and claim. Thus concomitant indications show and Qur'ānic testimony corroborates it that they tried to lure him through their sweet talk. But when they saw their words were having no impact on Joseph (sws), they threatened him that they would commit suicide to gain his sympathy. Thus, in order to validate their threat, some of them inflicted cuts on their hands at various places. They wanted to scare Joseph (sws) and give this message to him that they were not bluffing and would in fact go on and take their lives if he does not listen to them. It may be kept in mind that the threat to suicide is a very effective tool women use. This is their last resort when they see that they are not being able to entice a man. These women also did the same.

Whatever I have stated here is not merely a deduction. Thus further ahead in the *sūrah* (verses 50-51), it is mentioned that these women tried to temp and entice Joseph and it also mentioned that cutting their hands was part of a plot they had contrived:

فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُ الرَّسُوْلُ قَالَ ارْجِعْ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ فَسْـَٔلْهُ مَا بَالُ النِّسْوَةِ الّٰتِيْ قَطَّعْنَ اَيْدِيَهُنَّ ؕ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ بِكَيْدِهِنَّ عَلِيْمٌ قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُنَّ اِذْ رَاوَدْتُّنَّ يُوْسُفَ عَنْ نَّفْسِهٖ. (۱۲: ۵۰)

And the king said: "Bring him to me." Thus when the messenger came to Joseph, he said: "Go back to your master and ask him: 'What was the matter of the women who had cut their hands?' Indeed, my Lord is fully aware of their deception." The king asked: "What overtook you when you tried to tempt Joseph?"

Readers may deliberate that if the case was that these ladies had cut their hands after being wonderstruck at the beauty of Joseph (sws), how could this be termed as a plot? Moreover, if they had not tried to entice Joseph (sws), why would they be asked the question: مَا خَطْبُكُنَّ اِذْ رَاوَدْتُّنَّ يُوْسُفَ عَنْ نَّفْسِهٖ (what overtook you when you tried to tempt Joseph?). It may well be that this question arises in the mind of someone that if these women had tried to lure Joseph (sws), why has not the Qur'an mentioned it. My answer to this question is that it does not behoove the majesty of the Qur'ān to engage into such a nonsensical exchange. Hence, it expressed the whole incident with great brevity.

The threat to suicide is the final measure adopted by the weak. Once I was sitting at the shop of a friend in Bombay when a beggar came and sat on the road. The wealthy shop owner threw some coins to him but he insisted on a larger sum. The shop owner ignored him and became engaged in conversation with me. While he was bragging about his feats and powers, the beggar once again demanded the large sum and this time threatened the shop owner that if the does not give him this amount he will kill himself right there. The shop owner did not budge even at this threat and continued his conversation with me. Ultimately, I saw that the poor pauper had ignited his lower dress. It started to burn. Sweat broke out in me and I tried to oblige the beggar from

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my pocket but my friend did not allow me. As soon as his lower garment had burnt from his ankles to his knees and he did not see that the shop owner had budged, he hurriedly extinguished the fire and left that place. The shop owner said that he often encounters such deceivers. I remarked: they all seem like the ladies of Egypt.

The expression حَاشَ لِلّٰهِ is meant to show exception and absolve someone from bad traits. In the expression مَا هٰذَا بَشَرًا the letter مَا connotes لیس. For this reason, the word بَشَرًا is in the accusative. Examples of this usage exist in the Qur'ān.

This confession of the ladies is actually high praise for Joseph (sws) and also an excuse for their failure. Concealed in it is also the sentiment that if they were not able to win the heart of Joseph (sws), it was not because of any shortcoming in their scheme or their own beauty but because they were facing a noble angel; all their weapons of enticement were only effective against human beings.

قَالَتْ فَذٰلِكُنَّ الَّذِیْ لُمْتُنَّنِیْ فِیْهِ ؕ وَلَقَدْ رَاوَدْتُّهٗ عَنْ نَّفْسِهٖ فَاسْتَعْصَمَ ؕ وَلَئِنْ لَّمْ یَفْعَلْ مَاۤ اٰمُرُهٗ لَیُسْجَنَنَّ وَلَیَكُوْنًا مِّنَ الصّٰغِرِیْنَ ﴿۳۲﴾[28]

With the humiliation of these women, Zelicha felt relief from the sorrow of her own humiliation. Moreover, she reckoned that her own defeat did not mean that Joseph (sws) would go scot free. He would to jail and be humiliated himself. From here the trial of Joseph (sws) assumed a new form. Failure of love in its lust induces it to revenge. It seems that in those times masters had unlimited powers over their slaves. They could send them to jail if they were angry with them. And in the current scenario, Zelicha was the wife of a powerful government official. No one could dare hinder her directive.

قَالَ رَبِّ السِّجْنُ اَحَبُّ اِلَیَّ مِمَّا یَدْعُوْنَنِیْۤ اِلَیْهِ ۚ وَاِلَّا تَصْرِفْ عَنِّیْ كَیْدَهُنَّ اَصْبُ اِلَیْهِنَّ وَاَكُنْ مِّنَ الْجٰهِلِیْنَ ﴿۳۳﴾[29]

Zelicha had threatened Joseph (sws) with jail to pressurize him and make him succumb to her desire. However, he preferred to go to prison than do such an evil thing.

فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهٗ رَبُّهٗ فَصَرَفَ عَنْهُ كَیْدَهُنَّ ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِیْعُ الْعَلِیْمُ ﴿۳۴﴾[30]

The prayer uttered by Joseph (sws) was at a time when he had spent his full strength

28. She said: "Is it he about whom you were censuring me? Indeed, I tried to tempt him but he could not be lured. If he does do what I am asking him to do, he shall certainly go to prison and be humiliated."

29. He prayed: "Lord! The prison is dearer to me than what they are inviting me to. And if you now do not drive away their intrigue from me, I shall be inclined towards them and shall become among those who are overwhelmed with emotions."

30. So, his Lord accepted his prayer and warded off their intrigue from him. Indeed, He hears and knows all.

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to protect his faith. He even went as far as to prefer the tough life of the prison over the luring life offered by these elite women of Egypt. When a servant of God consigns himself to Him and seeks His help after showing so much perseverance then his prayer is definitely accepted and that too immediately. Thus Joseph's prayer was accepted and he was able to escape from the noose of lust thrown by these women. The last part of the verse signifies that God hears the requests and prayers of His servants and is also fully aware of what is in their hearts.

Section IV: Verses (35-53)

From here begins a new phase in the life of Joseph (sws) with another test. Though 'Azīz and Zelicha relatives fully knew the reality, they deemed it appropriate to send him to jail for some time. They must have thought that in this way people would stop gossiping about the whole issue and Zelicha's infatuation with him would also die down as she would no longer be able to see him. In the jail, two of Joseph's (sws) companions see a dream. They ask him to interpret it. He does so and the interpretation proves to be absolutely true. Ultimately, this paves the way of he interpreting the dream seen by the reigning king. After this, the king becomes such a huge fan of his that he virtually gives him the control of his kingdom.

Readers may now proceed to study the verses in the light of this background.

Text and Translation

ثُمَّ بَدَا لَهُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا رَاَوُا الْاٰيٰتِ لَيَسْجُنُنَّهٗ حَتّٰى حِيْنٍ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَدَخَلَ مَعَهُ السِّجْنَ فَتَيٰنِ ؕ قَالَ اَحَدُهُمَآ
اِنِّيْٓ اَرٰىنِيْٓ اَعْصِرُ خَمْرًا ۚ وَقَالَ الْاٰخَرُ اِنِّيْٓ اَرٰىنِيْٓ اَحْمِلُ فَوْقَ رَاْسِيْ خُبْزًا تَاْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِنْهُ ؕ نَبِّئْنَا بِتَاْوِيْلِهٖ ۚ اِنَّا
نَرٰىكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ قَالَ لَا يَاْتِيْكُمَا طَعَامٌ تُرْزَقٰنِهٖٓ اِلَّا نَبَّاْتُكُمَا بِتَاْوِيْلِهٖ قَبْلَ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَكُمَا ؕ ذٰلِكُمَا مِمَّا
عَلَّمَنِيْ رَبِّيْ ؕ اِنِّيْ تَرَكْتُ مِلَّةَ قَوْمٍ لَّا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَهُمْ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَاتَّبَعْتُ مِلَّةَ اٰبَآءِيْٓ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ
وَاِسْحٰقَ وَيَعْقُوْبَ ؕ مَا كَانَ لَنَآ اَنْ نُّشْرِكَ بِاللّٰهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ؕ ذٰلِكَ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى النَّاسِ وَلٰكِنَّ
اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ يٰصَاحِبَيِ السِّجْنِ ءَاَرْبَابٌ مُّتَفَرِّقُوْنَ خَيْرٌ اَمِ اللّٰهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ ﴿٣٩﴾ مَا
تَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اِلَّآ اَسْمَآءً سَمَّيْتُمُوْهَآ اَنْتُمْ وَاٰبَآؤُكُمْ مَّآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطٰنٍ ؕ اِنِ الْحُكْمُ اِلَّا لِلّٰهِ ؕ اَمَرَ
اَلَّا تَعْبُدُوْٓا اِلَّآ اِيَّاهُ ؕ ذٰلِكَ الدِّيْنُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ يٰصَاحِبَيِ السِّجْنِ اَمَّآ اَحَدُكُمَا
فَيَسْقِيْ رَبَّهٗ خَمْرًا ۚ وَاَمَّا الْاٰخَرُ فَيُصْلَبُ فَتَاْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِنْ رَّاْسِهٖ ؕ قُضِيَ الْاَمْرُ الَّذِيْ فِيْهِ تَسْتَفْتِيٰنِ ﴿٤١﴾ وَ

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قَالَ لِلَّذِیْ ظَنَّ اَنَّهٗ نَاجٍ مِّنْهُمَا اذْكُرْنِیْ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ۫ فَاَنْسٰىهُ الشَّیْطٰنُ ذِكْرَ رَبِّهٖ فَلَبِثَ فِی السِّجْنِ بِضْعَ سِنِیْنَ ﴿۴۲﴾ وَ
قَالَ الْمَلِكُ اِنِّیْۤ اَرٰی سَبْعَ بَقَرٰتٍ سِمَانٍ یَّاْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَّ سَبْعَ سُنْۢبُلٰتٍ خُضْرٍ وَّ اُخَرَ یٰبِسٰتٍ ؕ یٰۤاَیُّهَا
الْمَلَاُ اَفْتُوْنِیْ فِیْ رُءْیَایَ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ لِلرُّءْیَا تَعْبُرُوْنَ ﴿۴۳﴾ قَالُوْۤا اَضْغَاثُ اَحْلَامٍ ۚ وَ مَا نَحْنُ بِتَاْوِیْلِ الْاَحْلَامِ
بِعٰلِمِیْنَ ﴿۴۴﴾ وَ قَالَ الَّذِیْ نَجَا مِنْهُمَا وَ ادَّكَرَ بَعْدَ اُمَّةٍ اَنَا اُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِتَاْوِیْلِهٖ فَاَرْسِلُوْنِ ﴿۴۵﴾ یُوْسُفُ اَیُّهَا
الصِّدِّیْقُ اَفْتِنَا فِیْ سَبْعِ بَقَرٰتٍ سِمَانٍ یَّاْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَّ سَبْعِ سُنْۢبُلٰتٍ خُضْرٍ وَّ اُخَرَ یٰبِسٰتٍ ۙ لَّعَلِّیْۤ اَرْجِعُ
اِلَی النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ یَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۴۶﴾ قَالَ تَزْرَعُوْنَ سَبْعَ سِنِیْنَ دَاَبًا ۚ فَمَا حَصَدْتُّمْ فَذَرُوْهُ فِیْ سُنْۢبُلِهٖۤ اِلَّا قَلِیْلًا مِّمَّا
تَاْكُلُوْنَ ﴿۴۷﴾ ثُمَّ یَاْتِیْ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ذٰلِكَ سَبْعٌ شِدَادٌ یَّاْكُلْنَ مَا قَدَّمْتُمْ لَهُنَّ اِلَّا قَلِیْلًا مِّمَّا تُحْصِنُوْنَ ﴿۴۸﴾ ثُمَّ یَاْتِیْ
مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ذٰلِكَ عَامٌ فِیْهِ یُغَاثُ النَّاسُ وَ فِیْهِ یَعْصِرُوْنَ ﴿۴۹﴾ وَ قَالَ الْمَلِكُ ائْتُوْنِیْ بِهٖ ۚ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُ الرَّسُوْلُ قَالَ
ارْجِعْ اِلٰی رَبِّكَ فَسْـَٔلْهُ مَا بَالُ النِّسْوَةِ الّٰتِیْ قَطَّعْنَ اَیْدِیَهُنَّ ؕ اِنَّ رَبِّیْ بِكَیْدِهِنَّ عَلِیْمٌ ﴿۵۰﴾ قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُنَّ اِذْ
رَاوَدْتُّنَّ یُوْسُفَ عَنْ نَّفْسِهٖ ؕ قُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلّٰهِ مَا عَلِمْنَا عَلَیْهِ مِنْ سُوْٓءٍ ؕ قَالَتِ امْرَاَتُ الْعَزِیْزِ الْـٰٔنَ حَصْحَصَ
الْحَقُّ ۫ اَنَا رَاوَدْتُّهٗ عَنْ نَّفْسِهٖ وَ اِنَّهٗ لَمِنَ الصّٰدِقِیْنَ ﴿۵۱﴾ ذٰلِكَ لِیَعْلَمَ اَنِّیْ لَمْ اَخُنْهُ بِالْغَیْبِ وَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا یَهْدِیْ
كَیْدَ الْخَآئِنِیْنَ ﴿۵۲﴾ وَ مَاۤ اُبَرِّئُ نَفْسِیْ ۚ اِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَاَمَّارَةٌۢ بِالسُّوْٓءِ اِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّیْ ؕ اِنَّ رَبِّیْ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِیْمٌ ﴿۵۳﴾

Then even after observing the signs, they regarded it appropriate to imprison him for a while. And two other young men also entered the prison with him. One of them said "I see myself squeezing wine in a dream." And the other said: "I see myself carrying a loaf on my head from which birds are eating. Interpret this dream for us. We regard you to be among those who are thorough." He replied: "Before the food you are served here comes, I shall interpret it to you. This is from the knowledge which my Lord has taught me. I have left the religion of those who do not believe in God and it is they who reject the Hereafter. And I have adopted the religion of my elders: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We do not have the right to associate anything with God. This is a blessing on us and on people, yet most people are not grateful. Fellow Prisoners! Are many different gods better or that one God Who is dominant on all. You only worship some names besides Him which you and your forefathers have kept. God has not revealed any sanction in their favour. Sovereignty belongs to God alone. He has directed not to worship anyone except Him. This is the true religion but many people do not know. (35-40)

Fellow Prisoners! one of you will serve wine to his master. As for the other, he will be hanged; then birds will tear away his head and eat it. The matter you were asking

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of has thus been decided." (41)

And Joseph asked the person he thought would be freed from among them: "Mention me before your master." But Satan made him forget mentioning this to his master and Joseph remained in prison for many years. (42)

And the king said: "I dream of seven fat cows being devoured by seven lean ones and seven green ears of corn and seven other dry ones. Courtiers! Interpret this dream for me if you have the skill of interpretation." They said: "These are wavered dreams and we are not experts in the interpretation of such dreams." And of the two prisoners who had been freed and he remembered after a long time, said: "I shall interpret this dream for you. Thus, let me go." (43-45)

"Joseph! O man of your words, interpret for us seven fat cows that are being devoured by seven lean ones and about the green ears of corn and the other seven which are dry that I may go back to people so that they also come to know." He said: "For seven years continuously you will sow. Thus, from the crop you harvest except for a little that you may take and eat, leave all the rest in its ears. After this, seven very harsh years will follow which will consume the corn you had stored for those years except for a small quantity from what you were able to preserve. After this, a year will come again in which the pleading of people will be answered and they will squeeze grapes in it." (46-49)

And the king said: "Bring him to me." Thus when the messenger came to Joseph, he said: "Go back to your master and ask him: 'What was the matter of the women who had cut their hands?' Indeed, my Lord is fully aware of their deception." The king asked: "What overtook you when you tried to tempt Joseph?" They said: "Ḥāshālillāh, we did not find even a semblance of vice in him." The wife of 'Azīz said: "Now the truth has become evident. It was I who tried to tempt him. And he indeed is absolutely truthful." (50-51)

This is because he comes to know that I did not secretly betray him and indeed God does not let the intrigue of those who betray succeed. And I do not absolve my soul; the soul is prone to evil except when my Lord shows mercy. Indeed, my Lord is very Forgiving, Ever-Merciful." (52-53)

Explanation

ثُمَّ بَدَا لَهُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا رَاَوُا الْاٰيٰتِ لَيَسْجُنُنَّهٗ حَتّٰى حِيْنٍ ﴿۳۵﴾[31]

The word "signs" here refer to the evidence of Joseph's innocence. In other words, 'Azīz and his relatives fully understood that he was not at fault. It was Zelicha who was entirely at fault. However, to save evade embarrassment they proposed to imprison Joseph (sws) for some time. They must have thought that after some time

31. Then even after observing the signs, they regarded it appropriate to imprison him for a while.

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Zelicha's infatuation for him would die down and people too would loose interest in this whole incident. They would think that it was Joseph (sws) who was at fault and not Zelicha, and thus he was punished. The masters of those times had unlimited authority over their slaves. Thus sending Joseph (sws) to the prison would not have been a problem for 'Azīz in the first place. And if at all there was a hurdle, a person like him who was a government official and also a dignitary of the royal guard would have easily overcome it.

In short, from here begins a new period of trial for Joseph (sws). In the eyes of most people, this would be regarded as the toughest trial but since faith and character occupied the real importance, he actually desired in fact prayed for this scenario in contrast with the previous one.

وَدَخَلَ مَعَهُ السِّجْنَ فَتَيٰنِ ؕ قَالَ اَحَدُهُمَآ اِنِّیْٓ اَرٰىنِیْٓ اَعْصِرُ خَمْرًا ۚ وَقَالَ الْاٰخَرُ اِنِّیْٓ اَرٰىنِیْٓ اَحْمِلُ فَوْقَ رَاْسِیْ خُبْزًا تَاْكُلُ الطَّیْرُ مِنْهُ ؕ نَبِّئْنَا بِتَاْوِیْلِهٖ ۚ اِنَّا نَرٰىكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِیْنَ ﴿۳۶﴾[32]

The Qur'ān has not revealed the identity of the two young boys. If the statement of the Torah is accepted, it seems that one of them had the duty to serve wine to the king and the other one was his baker.

Since the dreams seen by the two were very different from common ones, they were curious about their interpretation. They already had had the chance to closely observe Joseph (sws) and were impressed by his knowledge and piety. Thus it was very natural that they termed to him for this interpretation.

The word مُحْسِن means someone who does everything as if he is standing in God's presence.

قَالَ لَا یَاْتِیْكُمَا طَعَامٌ تُرْزَقٰنِهٖٓ اِلَّا نَبَّاْتُكُمَا بِتَاْوِیْلِهٖ قَبْلَ اَنْ یَّاْتِیَكُمَا ؕ ذٰلِكُمَا مِمَّا عَلَّمَنِیْ رَبِّیْ ؕ اِنِّیْ تَرَكْتُ مِلَّةَ قَوْمٍ لَّا یُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَهُمْ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿۳۷﴾[33]

In the monotonous and morose environment of the prisons of those times, few incidents like the distribution of food would have been considered a break in such bleak routine. For this reason, Joseph (sws) while referring to it deferred his interpretation of the dream. The effect of this on the two young individuals who had

32. And two other young men also entered the prison with him. One of them said "I see myself squeezing wine in a dream." And the other said: "I see myself carrying a loaf on my head from which birds are eating. Interpret this dream for us. We regard you to be among those who are thorough."

33. He replied: "Before the food you are served here comes, I shall interpret it to you. This is from the knowledge which my Lord has taught me. I have left the religion of those who do not believe in God and it is they who reject the Hereafter.

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requested Joseph (sws) to interpret their dream was that they would have thought that their dream had been given importance by him and that he did not want to dismiss it by giving a casual explanation; they must have thought that he wanted to deliberate and then tell them its interpretation once he had turned to God as well for this purpose. On the other hand, Joseph (sws) created for himself a window of opportunity from this delay to preach the truth to them – something which had become the most cherished purpose of his life. When he saw two hearts inclined towards himself, he did not confine himself to their blind veneration. He wanted to call them towards worshipping God which if they accepted would grant them success in this world and the next.

Thus the first thing Joseph (sws) uttered was that this skill of interpreation of dreams was a gift of God to him. In other words, he wanted to impress upon the two young boys was that he himself was not the source of this knowledge; his Lord was. This is one of the various disciplines he had been blessed with from God.

The second thing he stated was that this blessing of God on him was because he had left those people who did not believe in Him.

The third thing that he said was that it was such people who reject the hereafter because the question of this belief cannot even arise for those who do not believe in God.

Deliberation shows that as soon as Joseph (sws) realized that these young individuals had some potential to understand, he sowed the seeds of all the basic teachings of religion in their hearts. At the same time, he gave this indication to them that if they have the courage to adopt this path, they will have to leave the ways of those who do not believe in God and in the hereafter.

The statement of Joseph (sws) that he had abondoned the path of those who do not believe in God and in the hereafter expresses a stark reality: he had fully evaluated truth and falsehood in his mind and was convinced on them as a result of this contemplation. If he had accepted the truth, it was not merely because he had inherited it from his forefathers but because it was worthy of acceptance. Similarly, if he had forsook falsehood, it was because it was fully evident to him that it was in fact falsehood.

وَاتَّبَعْتُ مِلَّةَ اٰبَآءِیْٓ اِبْرٰهِیْمَ وَاِسْحٰقَ وَیَعْقُوْبَ ؕ مَا كَانَ لَنَآ اَنْ نُّشْرِكَ بِاللّٰهِ مِنْ شَیْءٍ ؕ ذٰلِكَ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللّٰهِ عَلَیْنَا وَعَلَى النَّاسِ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا یَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿۳۸﴾[34]

This verse states the path Joseph (sws) adopted after abandoning the path of those who do not believe in God. He deemed this explanation to be necessary so that the two young individuals were not under the misconception that the path Joseph (sws)

34. And I have adopted the religion of my elders: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We do not have the right to associate anything with God. This is a blessing on us and on people, yet most people are not grateful.

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was calling them to was originated by him. He wanted to impress upon them fully that this was the path of the famous luminaries as Abraham (sws), Isaac (sws) and Jacob (sws). Their names were well known in nearby lands and it may well be that these two jail companions of Joseph (sws) were also aware of them.

The words "We do not have the right to associate anything with God" delineate the natural and logical superiority of the religion of monotheism, once its historical pre-eminence and importance had been referred to in the previous verse. They imply that it is crystal clear that a single creator has brought this world into existence; it is He Who has given life and sustenance to everyone and giving life and death to His creation is in His hands. However, there is evidence before them that there are others who share these tasks with Him. So when no such evidence exists in intellect and nature and in the world within and outside human beings, what right have they to associate partners with Him without any grounds?

يٰصَاحِبَيِ السِّجْنِ ءَاَرْبَابٌ مُّتَفَرِّقُوْنَ خَيْرٌ اَمِ اللّٰهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ ﴿٣٩﴾ مَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اِلَّآ اَسْمَآءً سَمَّيْتُمُوْهَآ اَنْتُمْ وَاٰبَآؤُكُمْ مَّآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطٰنٍ ۭ اِنِ الْحُكْمُ اِلَّا لِلّٰهِ ۭ اَمَرَ اَلَّا تَعْبُدُوْٓا اِلَّآ اِيَّاهُ ۭ ذٰلِكَ الدِّيْنُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾[35]

Joseph (sws) has addressed the two young men in a very eloquent and endearing way. At times, facing the same hardship induces the sentiments of sympathy, love, sincerity and mutual consideration and kindness to a great degreee. The purpose of this address is that the addressees should hear these words with full attention and regard each word to originate from sentiments of mutual well-being and sincerity.

The word الْقَهَّارُ means one who controls and dominates everyone; none is beyond his jurisdiction. In other words, as far as God is concerned, He is a self-evident reality – in fact, the most self-evident of realities and both polytheists and monotheists believe in Him. However, the question that He has associates needs a strong proof. In the absence of any such proof, what kind of wisdom is it to put the yoke of slavery of some being in one's neck merely because of desire? If a slave is asked whether he likes having one master or several, he will definitely prefer the first option. A human being's nature is no different. He has no interest to make someone god and make him dominate his affairs. If he believes in one God, it is because his intellect and nature compel him to this. What compels a person to make others as God's associates and become their slaves? In verse 29 of Sūrah al-Zumar, the Qur'ān has explained this fact

35. Fellow Prisoners! Are many different gods better or that one God Who is dominant on all. You only worship some names besides Him which you and your forefathers have kept. God has not revealed any sanction in their favour. Sovereignty belongs to God alone. He has directed not to worship anyone except Him. This is the true religion but many people do not know.

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of human nature in the following words: ضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا رَّجُلًا فِيْهِ شُرَكَآءُ مُتَشٰكِسُوْنَ وَرَجُلًا سَلَمًا لِّرَجُلٍ ؕ هَلْ يَسْتَوِيٰنِ مَثَلًا.[36] In the verse under discussion, the purpose of mentioning الْقَهَّارُ is when God dominates and controls all and this is also the essential consequence of His attributes, what then is the need to associate others in His godhead?

يٰصَاحِبَيِ السِّجْنِ اَمَّآ اَحَدُكُمَا فَيَسْقِيْ رَبَّهٗ خَمْرًا ۚ وَاَمَّا الْاٰخَرُ فَيُصْلَبُ فَتَاْكُلُ الطَّيْرُ مِنْ رَّاْسِهٖ ؕ قُضِيَ الْاَمْرُ الَّذِيْ فِيْهِ تَسْتَفْتِيٰنِ ﴿۴۱﴾[37]

The thing which dominates the minds of God's prophets is to invite people to His message. For this reason, they seize any opportunity that comes their way to present this message. When Joseph (sws) saw that his companions had turned to him with trust and regard, he first delivered the message of monotheism to them and after that intepreted their dream for them.

وَقَالَ لِلَّذِيْ ظَنَّ اَنَّهٗ نَاجٍ مِّنْهُمَا اذْكُرْنِيْ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ۫ فَاَنْسٰىهُ الشَّيْطٰنُ ذِكْرَ رَبِّهٖ فَلَبِثَ فِي السِّجْنِ بِضْعَ سِنِيْنَ ﴿۴۲﴾[38]

The word "master" here refers to the king and this person was the wine-server of the king. The word "mention" here means to convey Joseph's knowledge and wisdom that came to his observation, in particular, his dream interpretation skill. And such incidents happen every now and then in the courts of kings. Joseph (sws) must have expressed this desire thinking that this could be a way out for him in a situation where all doors to justice had been closed. Planning a legitimate scheme to achieve a legitimate purpose is not against trust in God. What is against this trust is to adopt an illegitimate scheme after one gets frustrated. God does not like that person who does nothing and merely trusts in Him. He likes that person who takes up the challenge to fight difficult circumstances and uses all means and resources but at every step respects the boundaries set by God. This is the real test for which God has created this world and it is actually the very purpose of its creation.

In the expression: فَاَنْسٰىهُ الشَّيْطٰنُ ذِكْرَ رَبِّهٖ, the nature of annexure (*iḍāfat*) in ذِكْرَ رَبِّهٖ is of the same nature as in مَكْرُ الَّيْلِ وَ النَّهَارِ etc. The prisoner who got freed forgot to mention Joseph (sws) before the king, his master. This forgetfulness is asrcibed to Satan. This because it is Satan who makes people forget acts of virtue. It is evident from this that

36. God states a parable of a slave who has many masters having different objectives and another slave who is in the total ownership of one master. Can both of them be alike?

37. "Fellow Prisoners! one of you will serve wine to his master. As for the other, he will be hanged; then birds will tear away his head and eat it. The matter you were asking of has thus been decided."

38. And Joseph asked the person he thought would be freed from among them: "Mention me before your master." But Satan made him forget mentioning this to his master and Joseph remained in prison for many years.

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it is the obligation of a person to plan and use means and resources to execute the plan but the materialization of this plan depends on God's wisdom and scheme. Thus it was a requisite of God's wisdom that Joseph (sws) remain in prison for some more years. So when that person got released from jail, he totally forgot what his fellow prisoner had requested him. This is how God's scheme materialized.

وَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ اِنِّيْٓ اَرٰى سَبْعَ بَقَرٰتٍ سِمَانٍ يَّاْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَّسَبْعَ سُنْۢبُلٰتٍ خُضْرٍ وَّاُخَرَ يٰبِسٰتٍ ؕ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْمَلَاُ اَفْتُوْنِيْ فِيْ رُءْيَايَ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ لِلرُّءْيَا تَعْبُرُوْنَ ﴿۴۳﴾[39]

When God wants to fulfil a plan then however farfetched it may be, its means and resources start coming into being out of their own accord. The king regarded this dream to be very significant. This is evident from his last sentence: "interpret this dream for me if you have the skill of interpretation." He also had this feeling that his rather naïve courtiers would not be able to interpret this dream.

The second part of the dream has a suppression. It is: seven dry ears were eating away the seven green ones. Thus the word يأكلن is suppressed after اُخَرَ يٰبِسٰتٍ. In verse 48 ahead, this has been explained. My translation takes this suppression into account.

قَالُوْٓا اَضْغَاثُ اَحْلَامٍ ۚ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِتَاْوِيْلِ الْاَحْلَامِ بِعٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿۴۴﴾[40]

The word ضِغْثٌ means a pack of whithered shrubs and vegetation. Its plural is اَضْغَاثٌ which is also used for a set of baseless concepts and pieces of information. From here the expression اَضْغَاثُ اَحْلَامٍ was coined. It means "wavered dreams." They are the result of a gaseous stomach and have no significance as regards as their implication.

The courtiers tried to pacify the king by saying this. At the same time, they also tried to safeguard their own reputation. They meant that they were capable of interpreting meaningful dreams and not such baseless ones.

وَقَالَ الَّذِيْ نَجَا مِنْهُمَا وَادَّكَرَ بَعْدَ اُمَّةٍ اَنَا اُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِتَاْوِيْلِهٖ فَاَرْسِلُوْنِ ﴿۴۵﴾[41]

The words اذكر, اددكر and اذدكر are synonymous.

The word اُمَّةٌ means "a period of time."

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39. And the king said: "I dream of seven fat cows being devoured by seven lean ones and seven green ears of corn and seven other dry ones. Courtiers! Interpret this dream for me if you have the skill of interpretation."

40. They said: "These are wavered dreams and we are not experts in the interpretation of such dreams."

41. And of the two prisoners who had been freed and he remembered after a long time, said: "I shall interpret this dream for you. Thus, let me go."

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The helplessness of the courtiers in interpreting the dream reminded the wine-server of Joseph's skill in interpreting his own dream. The interpretation had turned out to be true. A considerable time period had elapsed and he had forgotten to mention him before the king. He immediately told them that he could interpret this dream for them if they allow him to go and meet Joseph (sws).

يُوْسُفُ اَيُّهَا الصِّدِّيْقُ اَفْتِنَا فِيْ سَبْعِ بَقَرٰتٍ سِمَانٍ يَّاْكُلُهُنَّ سَبْعٌ عِجَافٌ وَّ سَبْعِ سُنْۢبُلٰتٍ خُضْرٍ وَّ اُخَرَ يٰبِسٰتٍ ۙ لَّعَلِّيْٓ اَرْجِعُ اِلَى النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۴۶﴾[42]

Owing to concomitant indications, a part of the episode is suppressed here: the courtiers ultimately allowed the wine-server to go to Joseph (sws) and he went to him and addressed him with the words mentioned in this verse. It is evident from the way he addressed Joseph (sws) that he did not merely regard him to be a person who skillfully interpreted dreams; on the contrary, because of his experiences in jail with him he knew that Joseph (sws) was an embodiment of purity and veracity too. This had made him a huge of fan of Joseph (sws). Thus he did not address him by "O one who interprets dreams." His words were: "O man of your words" which comprehensively covers all his noble attributes.

In this verse, the wine-server describes the dream to Joseph (sws). The words "so that they also come to know" subtly refer to the fact that people are only making wild guesses in intepreting this dream. However, he will be able to correctly interpret it.

قَالَ تَزْرَعُوْنَ سَبْعَ سِنِيْنَ دَاَبًا ۚ فَمَا حَصَدْتُّمْ فَذَرُوْهُ فِيْ سُنْۢبُلِهٖٓ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا مِّمَّا تَاْكُلُوْنَ ﴿۴۷﴾ ثُمَّ يَاْتِيْ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ذٰلِكَ سَبْعٌ شِدَادٌ يَّاْكُلْنَ مَا قَدَّمْتُمْ لَهُنَّ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا مِّمَّا تُحْصِنُوْنَ ﴿۴۸﴾ ثُمَّ يَاْتِيْ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ذٰلِكَ عَامٌ فِيْهِ يُغَاثُ النَّاسُ وَفِيْهِ يَعْصِرُوْنَ ﴿۴۹﴾[43]

The word تَزْرَعُوْنَ occurs as an enunciative (khabar) but implies the imperative. When the occasion is of guidance and advice, adopting this style is more apt. The Qur'an contains parallels of it.

Joseph (sws) not only told them the interpretation of the dream but also guided them to a practical suggestion to combat the seven years of drought. He told them to cultivate the land for seven consecutive years. The crop they harverst should be taken

42. "Joseph! O man of your words, interpret for us seven fat cows that are being devoured by seven lean ones and about the green ears of corn and the other seven which are dry that I may go back to people so that they also come to know."

43. He said: "For seven years continuously you will sow. Thus, from the crop you harvest except for a little that you may take and eat, leave all the rest in its ears. After this, seven very harsh years will follow which will consume the corn you had stored for those years except for a small quantity from what you were able to preserve. After this, a year will come again in which the pleading of people will be answered and they will squeeze grapes in it."

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out in accordance with its need and let the remaining one be kept in its ears so that it remains secure. It may be kept in mind that as long as the corn is in the ears, they remain secure from termite, insects and other calamities.

Jospeph (sws) explained the second part of the dream by saying that they will face seven years of severe drought. This drought will destroy the grain they had saved. Very little will remain. At the same time, he also gave them glad tidings that after that a year will come when God will responed to the prayers and pleadings of people. He will send down abundant rain and they will get a thumping crop of grapes. This will serve them their needs well.

Some people have interpreted the word يُغَاثُ as rain. However, in my opinion, this is not its literal meaning. Though as its consequence, it can be translated as rain. By taking the word in its literal meaning of "seeking help", a comprehensive picture of the all-embracing affects of drought on people is portrayed. The implication is that it will be such an extra-ordinary year that people will cry out and be forced to plead and beg the Almighty until finally their pleadings will be answered.

It may be kept in mind that when people face hardships, the most extreme polytheists and disbelievers cry out for help from the one God and forget their hypothetical deities, as is specified by the Qur'ān. Moroever, this period of drought was passed by the people of Egypt under the guidance of Joseph (sws). This made everyone from the king to the masses his great admirers.

The word يَعْصِرُوْنَ is also used in its consequential meaning ie., it will rain in abundance. The creepers of grapes will become very productive. People will profusely squeeze grapes. There is subtle reference in this word. It is known that the person who was asking Joseph to interpret his dream was the specially deputed wine-server of the king. This has made the use of the word يَعْصِرُوْنَ very apt.

وَ قَالَ الْمَلِكُ ائْتُوْنِيْ بِهٖ ۚ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُ الرَّسُوْلُ قَالَ ارْجِعْ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ فَسْـَٔلْهُ مَا بَالُ النِّسْوَةِ الّٰتِيْ قَطَّعْنَ اَيْدِيَهُنَّ ؕ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ بِكَيْدِهِنَّ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿۵۰﴾[44]

Here too a part of the anecdote is suppressed. It is evident from the context though. The messenger of the king went back and narrated the interpretation of the Jospeh (sws) before him. He was so impressed by it that he immediately ordered that the prisoner come to his presence. The messenger went back and gave Joseph (sws) the glad tidings of the summons. He would have expected that a prisoner who had suffered hardships in the jail for several years would be elated to hear the order of his release and would immediately go along with him. But Joseph (sws) against all his

44. And the king said: "Bring him to me." Thus when the messenger came to Joseph, he said: "Go back to your master and ask him: 'What was the matter of the women who had cut their hands?' Indeed, my Lord is fully aware of their deception."

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expectations made the request stated in the verse. He wanted the incident which was used as an excuse to imprison him to be investigated first. He knew that his Lord was fully aware of the conspiracy these people had hatched and this was sufficient assurance for him that his Lord knew the truth. However, investigation into this incident would absolve him and no one would dare blame him later. If one deeply analyzes this statement of Joseph (sws), it becomes evident that he did not like to be freed and become closer to the king merely on the basis of a temporary benefit of the doubt expressed by the king about him. He gave absolving himself from the blame cast on him the most importance and such was his trust on his own truthfulness and on his Lord that he did not the slightest care how many lies his adversaries could fabricate to prove him to be a criminal.

قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُنَّ اِذْ رَاوَدْتُّنَّ يُوْسُفَ عَنْ نَّفْسِهٖ ؕ قُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلّٰهِ مَا عَلِمْنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنْ سُوْٓءٍ ؕ قَالَتِ امْرَاَتُ الْعَزِيْزِ الْـٰٔنَ حَصْحَصَ الْحَقُّ ۫ اَنَا رَاوَدْتُّهٗ عَنْ نَّفْسِهٖ وَ اِنَّهٗ لَمِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿۵۱﴾[45]

Here too it is evident from concomitant indications that a part of the anecdote is suppressed: the messenger delivered Joseph's (sws) desire to the king. Thus the king called the women and asked them what happened when they tried to lure him. It is evident from these words of the king that by that time he was fully sure that Joseph (sws) was innocent and these women were the deceivers. Had this not been the case, his words would have been different. He would have asked them: "What is the incident that took place between you and Joseph?" In reality, truth requires patience for its manifestation. If a person adheres to truthfulness and shows the befitting patience that is needed for it, the time definitely comes when everything around him bears witness to his veracity. So much so, even his enemies, as readers will see, vouch for thim.

The words حَاشَ and حَاشَا are used to absolve someone of blame.

It has been pointed out earlier that the tremendous patience shown by Joseph (sws) had turned the tide in his favour. Such was its extent that it was not possible for anyone to say anything against him. Thus the women also openly confessed that they did not find any evil desire in him. The wife of 'Azīz went way ahead from these women in her confession of the truth as can be seen from her words in the verse.

ذٰلِكَ لِيَعْلَمَ اَنِّيْ لَمْ اَخُنْهُ بِالْغَيْبِ وَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِيْ كَيْدَ الْخَآئِنِيْنَ ﴿۵۲﴾ وَ مَآ اُبَرِّئُ نَفْسِيْ ۚ اِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَاَمَّارَةٌۢ بِالسُّوْٓءِ

45. The king asked: "What overtook you when you tried to tempt Joseph?" They said: "Ḥāshālillāh, we did not find even a semblance of vice in him." The wife of 'Azīz said: "Now the truth has become evident. It was I who tried to tempt him. And he indeed is absolutely truthful."

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اِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّیْ ؕ اِنَّ رَبِّیْ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِیْمٌ ﴿۵۳﴾[46]

Once he was proven innocent, Joseph (sws) here stated the reason for re-opening the matter even though the king had made up his mind to free him without bringing it up.

The antecdent of the pronoun in لِيَعْلَمَ is the king who is clearly mentioned in the previous verses and the antecedent of the pronoun in اَخُنْهُ is 'Azīz for which clear concomintant indications exist. In the presence of such indications, such apparent ambiguity in the antecedents is not a defect of a sentence.

After that Joseph (sws) further clarified that his attitude should not lead people to the misconception that he thinks himself to be beyond the sins of base desires; he has these desires and his soul also induces him to sin. A person remains secure from them as long as he earns the blessing and grace of God with him. His implication was that if he was secure from trials, it was not because desires do not bother him; it was because of God's mercy on him. He is one who forgives.

In اِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّیْ, the letter مَا is connotes a locus.

Here, readers may keep in mind the established practice of God that He has innately given human beings the awareness of virtue and vice and after that they are free to choose between them. If a person chooses the path of virtue and faces trials with steadfastness, he receives the grace and affection of God and treading his path is made easy by Him until finally he reaches his destination. However, if a person adopts the path of vice, he is given respite by God.

Joseph (sws) adopted the path of virtue and faced all the hurdles that came him way with full perseverance. So much so, he subdued his base desires and he was bestowed with a high rank that was ordained for him from God.

Section V: Verses (54-101)

From here begins a new phase in the life of Joseph (sws). Not only was he released from prison, the whole country of Egypt came under his control. In the seven year drought, not only did he efficiently succeed in providing food for all the people, he was also is able to help out neighbouring contries in their edible needs. The brothers who were instrumental in having him enslaved and ultimately been thrown in prison come to his presence to obtain grain. Obviously, until that time they did not know that this was the same brother they had thrown in the well. Taking advantage of this ignorance, Jospeh also tested them in subtle ways to check whether they had changed

46. This is because he comes to know that I did not secretly betray him and indeed God does not let the intrigue of those who betray succeed. And I do not absolve my soul; the soul is prone to evil except when my Lord shows mercy. Indeed, my Lord is very Forgiving, Ever-Merciful."

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from inside after doing all that they did to him. Finally, the time came when these brothers become aware of the identity of the person to whom they had come to for the grain. They come to know that this was the same brother they had thrown in the well. After that, Joseph (sws) calls his parents and all his brothers. They arrive and show respect to him by bending their heads. In this way, the dream seen by Joseph (sws) comes true when he saw that the sun and the moon and eleven stars were prostrating before him.

Readers may now proceed to study these verses.

Text and Translation

وَ قَالَ الۡمَلِكُ ائۡتُوۡنِىۡ بِهٖۤ اَسۡتَخۡلِصۡهُ لِنَفۡسِىۡ ۚ فَلَمَّا كَلَّمَهٗ قَالَ اِنَّكَ الۡيَوۡمَ لَدَيۡنَا مَكِيۡنٌ اَمِيۡنٌ ﴿۵۴﴾ قَالَ
اجۡعَلۡنِىۡ عَلٰى خَزَآئِنِ الۡاَرۡضِ ۚ اِنِّىۡ حَفِيۡظٌ عَلِيۡمٌ ﴿۵۵﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوۡسُفَ فِى الۡاَرۡضِ ۚ يَتَبَوَّاُ مِنۡهَا حَيۡثُ
يَشَآءُ ؕ نُصِيۡبُ بِرَحۡمَتِنَا مَنۡ نَّشَآءُ وَلَا نُضِيۡعُ اَجۡرَ الۡمُحۡسِنِيۡنَ ﴿۵۶﴾ وَلَاَجۡرُ الۡاٰخِرَةِ خَيۡرٌ لِّلَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا وَكَانُوۡا
يَتَّقُوۡنَ ﴿۵۷﴾ وَجَآءَ اِخۡوَةُ يُوۡسُفَ فَدَخَلُوۡا عَلَيۡهِ فَعَرَفَهُمۡ وَهُمۡ لَهٗ مُنۡكِرُوۡنَ ﴿۵۸﴾ وَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُمۡ بِجَهَازِهِمۡ قَالَ
ائۡتُوۡنِىۡ بِاَخٍ لَّكُمۡ مِّنۡ اَبِيۡكُمۡ ۚ اَلَا تَرَوۡنَ اَنِّىۡۤ اُوۡفِى الۡكَيۡلَ وَاَنَا خَيۡرُ الۡمُنۡزِلِيۡنَ ﴿۵۹﴾ فَاِنۡ لَّمۡ تَاۡتُوۡنِىۡ بِهٖ فَلَا كَيۡلَ لَكُمۡ
عِنۡدِىۡ وَلَا تَقۡرَبُوۡنِ ﴿۶۰﴾ قَالُوۡا سَنُرَاوِدُ عَنۡهُ اَبَاهُ وَاِنَّا لَفٰعِلُوۡنَ ﴿۶۱﴾ وَقَالَ لِفِتۡيٰنِهِ اجۡعَلُوۡا بِضَاعَتَهُمۡ فِىۡ
رِحَالِهِمۡ لَعَلَّهُمۡ يَعۡرِفُوۡنَهَاۤ اِذَا انۡقَلَبُوۡۤا اِلٰۤى اَهۡلِهِمۡ لَعَلَّهُمۡ يَرۡجِعُوۡنَ ﴿۶۲﴾ فَلَمَّا رَجَعُوۡۤا اِلٰۤى اَبِيۡهِمۡ قَالُوۡا يٰۤاَبَانَا مُنِعَ
مِنَّا الۡكَيۡلُ فَاَرۡسِلۡ مَعَنَاۤ اَخَانَا نَكۡتَلۡ وَاِنَّا لَهٗ لَحٰفِظُوۡنَ ﴿۶۳﴾ قَالَ هَلۡ اٰمَنُكُمۡ عَلَيۡهِ اِلَّا كَمَاۤ اَمِنۡتُكُمۡ عَلٰۤى
اَخِيۡهِ مِنۡ قَبۡلُ ؕ فَاللّٰهُ خَيۡرٌ حٰفِظًا ۖ وَّهُوَ اَرۡحَمُ الرّٰحِمِيۡنَ ﴿۶۴﴾ وَلَمَّا فَتَحُوۡا مَتَاعَهُمۡ وَجَدُوۡا بِضَاعَتَهُمۡ رُدَّتۡ
اِلَيۡهِمۡ ؕ قَالُوۡا يٰۤاَبَانَا مَا نَبۡغِىۡ ؕ هٰذِهٖ بِضَاعَتُنَا رُدَّتۡ اِلَيۡنَا ۚ وَنَمِيۡرُ اَهۡلَنَا وَنَحۡفَظُ اَخَانَا وَنَزۡدَادُ كَيۡلَ بَعِيۡرٍ ؕ
ذٰلِكَ كَيۡلٌ يَّسِيۡرٌ ﴿۶۵﴾ قَالَ لَنۡ اُرۡسِلَهٗ مَعَكُمۡ حَتّٰى تُؤۡتُوۡنِ مَوۡثِقًا مِّنَ اللّٰهِ لَتَاۡتُنَّنِىۡ بِهٖۤ اِلَّاۤ اَنۡ يُّحَاطَ بِكُمۡ ۚ فَلَمَّاۤ
اٰتَوۡهُ مَوۡثِقَهُمۡ قَالَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى مَا نَقُوۡلُ وَكِيۡلٌ ﴿۶۶﴾ وَقَالَ يٰبَنِىَّ لَا تَدۡخُلُوۡا مِنۡۢ بَابٍ وَّاحِدٍ وَّادۡخُلُوۡا مِنۡ اَبۡوَابٍ
مُّتَفَرِّقَةٍ ؕ وَمَاۤ اُغۡنِىۡ عَنۡكُمۡ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ مِنۡ شَىۡءٍ ؕ اِنِ الۡحُكۡمُ اِلَّا لِلّٰهِ ؕ عَلَيۡهِ تَوَكَّلۡتُ ۚ وَعَلَيۡهِ فَلۡيَتَوَكَّلِ
الۡمُتَوَكِّلُوۡنَ ﴿۶۷﴾ وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوۡا مِنۡ حَيۡثُ اَمَرَهُمۡ اَبُوۡهُمۡ ؕ مَا كَانَ يُغۡنِىۡ عَنۡهُمۡ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ مِنۡ شَىۡءٍ اِلَّا حَاجَةً فِىۡ
نَفۡسِ يَعۡقُوۡبَ قَضٰٮهَا ؕ وَاِنَّهٗ لَذُوۡ عِلۡمٍ لِّمَا عَلَّمۡنٰهُ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكۡثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعۡلَمُوۡنَ ﴿۶۸﴾ وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوۡا عَلٰى يُوۡسُفَ

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اٰوٰۤی اِلَیۡہِ اَخَاہُ قَالَ اِنِّیۡۤ اَنَا اَخُوۡکَ فَلَا تَبۡتَئِسۡ بِمَا کَانُوۡا یَعۡمَلُوۡنَ ﴿۶۹﴾ فَلَمَّا جَہَّزَہُمۡ بِجَہَازِہِمۡ جَعَلَ السِّقَایَۃَ
فِیۡ رَحۡلِ اَخِیۡہِ ثُمَّ اَذَّنَ مُؤَذِّنٌ اَیَّتُہَا الۡعِیۡرُ اِنَّکُمۡ لَسٰرِقُوۡنَ ﴿۷۰﴾ قَالُوۡا وَ اَقۡبَلُوۡا عَلَیۡہِمۡ مَّاذَا تَفۡقِدُوۡنَ ﴿۷۱﴾ قَالُوۡا
نَفۡقِدُ صُوَاعَ الۡمَلِکِ وَ لِمَنۡ جَآءَ بِہٖ حِمۡلُ بَعِیۡرٍ وَّ اَنَا بِہٖ زَعِیۡمٌ ﴿۷۲﴾ قَالُوۡا تَاللّٰہِ لَقَدۡ عَلِمۡتُمۡ مَّا جِئۡنَا لِنُفۡسِدَ
فِی الۡاَرۡضِ وَ مَا کُنَّا سٰرِقِیۡنَ ﴿۷۳﴾ قَالُوۡا فَمَا جَزَآؤُہٗۤ اِنۡ کُنۡتُمۡ کٰذِبِیۡنَ ﴿۷۴﴾ قَالُوۡا جَزَآؤُہٗ مَنۡ وُّجِدَ فِیۡ رَحۡلِہٖ فَہُوَ
جَزَآؤُہٗ ؕ کَذٰلِکَ نَجۡزِی الظّٰلِمِیۡنَ ﴿۷۵﴾ فَبَدَاَ بِاَوۡعِیَتِہِمۡ قَبۡلَ وِعَآءِ اَخِیۡہِ ثُمَّ اسۡتَخۡرَجَہَا مِنۡ وِّعَآءِ اَخِیۡہِ ؕ
کَذٰلِکَ کِدۡنَا لِیُوۡسُفَ ؕ مَا کَانَ لِیَاۡخُذَ اَخَاہُ فِیۡ دِیۡنِ الۡمَلِکِ اِلَّاۤ اَنۡ یَّشَآءَ اللّٰہُ ؕ نَرۡفَعُ دَرَجٰتٍ مَّنۡ نَّشَآءُ ؕ وَ
فَوۡقَ کُلِّ ذِیۡ عِلۡمٍ عَلِیۡمٌ ﴿۷۶﴾ قَالُوۡۤا اِنۡ یَّسۡرِقۡ فَقَدۡ سَرَقَ اَخٌ لَّہٗ مِنۡ قَبۡلُ ۚ فَاَسَرَّہَا یُوۡسُفُ فِیۡ نَفۡسِہٖ وَ لَمۡ یُبۡدِہَا
لَہُمۡ ۚ قَالَ اَنۡتُمۡ شَرٌّ مَّکَانًا ۚ وَ اللّٰہُ اَعۡلَمُ بِمَا تَصِفُوۡنَ ﴿۷۷﴾ قَالُوۡا یٰۤاَیُّہَا الۡعَزِیۡزُ اِنَّ لَہٗۤ اَبًا شَیۡخًا کَبِیۡرًا فَخُذۡ اَحَدَنَا
مَکَانَہٗ ۚ اِنَّا نَرٰىکَ مِنَ الۡمُحۡسِنِیۡنَ ﴿۷۸﴾ قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللّٰہِ اَنۡ نَّاۡخُذَ اِلَّا مَنۡ وَّجَدۡنَا مَتَاعَنَا عِنۡدَہٗۤ ۙ اِنَّاۤ اِذًا
لَّظٰلِمُوۡنَ ﴿۷۹﴾ فَلَمَّا اسۡتَیۡـَٔسُوۡا مِنۡہُ خَلَصُوۡا نَجِیًّا ؕ قَالَ کَبِیۡرُہُمۡ اَلَمۡ تَعۡلَمُوۡۤا اَنَّ اَبَاکُمۡ قَدۡ اَخَذَ عَلَیۡکُمۡ مَّوۡثِقًا
مِّنَ اللّٰہِ وَ مِنۡ قَبۡلُ مَا فَرَّطۡتُّمۡ فِیۡ یُوۡسُفَ ۚ فَلَنۡ اَبۡرَحَ الۡاَرۡضَ حَتّٰی یَاۡذَنَ لِیۡۤ اَبِیۡۤ اَوۡ یَحۡکُمَ اللّٰہُ لِیۡ ۚ وَ ہُوَ خَیۡرُ
الۡحٰکِمِیۡنَ ﴿۸۰﴾ اِرۡجِعُوۡۤا اِلٰۤی اَبِیۡکُمۡ فَقُوۡلُوۡا یٰۤاَبَانَاۤ اِنَّ ابۡنَکَ سَرَقَ ۚ وَ مَا شَہِدۡنَاۤ اِلَّا بِمَا عَلِمۡنَا وَ مَا کُنَّا لِلۡغَیۡبِ
حٰفِظِیۡنَ ﴿۸۱﴾ وَ سۡـَٔلِ الۡقَرۡیَۃَ الَّتِیۡ کُنَّا فِیۡہَا وَ الۡعِیۡرَ الَّتِیۡۤ اَقۡبَلۡنَا فِیۡہَا ؕ وَ اِنَّا لَصٰدِقُوۡنَ ﴿۸۲﴾ قَالَ بَلۡ سَوَّلَتۡ
لَکُمۡ اَنۡفُسُکُمۡ اَمۡرًا ؕ فَصَبۡرٌ جَمِیۡلٌ ؕ عَسَی اللّٰہُ اَنۡ یَّاۡتِیَنِیۡ بِہِمۡ جَمِیۡعًا ؕ اِنَّہٗ ہُوَ الۡعَلِیۡمُ الۡحَکِیۡمُ ﴿۸۳﴾ وَ تَوَلّٰی
عَنۡہُمۡ وَ قَالَ یٰۤاَسَفٰی عَلٰی یُوۡسُفَ وَ ابۡیَضَّتۡ عَیۡنٰہُ مِنَ الۡحُزۡنِ فَہُوَ کَظِیۡمٌ ﴿۸۴﴾ قَالُوۡا تَاللّٰہِ تَفۡتَؤُا تَذۡکُرُ یُوۡسُفَ
حَتّٰی تَکُوۡنَ حَرَضًا اَوۡ تَکُوۡنَ مِنَ الۡہٰلِکِیۡنَ ﴿۸۵﴾ قَالَ اِنَّمَاۤ اَشۡکُوۡا بَثِّیۡ وَ حُزۡنِیۡۤ اِلَی اللّٰہِ وَ اَعۡلَمُ مِنَ اللّٰہِ مَا لَا
تَعۡلَمُوۡنَ ﴿۸۶﴾ یٰبَنِیَّ اذۡہَبُوۡا فَتَحَسَّسُوۡا مِنۡ یُّوۡسُفَ وَ اَخِیۡہِ وَ لَا تَایۡـَٔسُوۡا مِنۡ رَّوۡحِ اللّٰہِ ؕ اِنَّہٗ لَا یَایۡـَٔسُ مِنۡ رَّوۡحِ
اللّٰہِ اِلَّا الۡقَوۡمُ الۡکٰفِرُوۡنَ ﴿۸۷﴾ فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوۡا عَلَیۡہِ قَالُوۡا یٰۤاَیُّہَا الۡعَزِیۡزُ مَسَّنَا وَ اَہۡلَنَا الضُّرُّ وَ جِئۡنَا بِبِضَاعَۃٍ
مُّزۡجٰىۃٍ فَاَوۡفِ لَنَا الۡکَیۡلَ وَ تَصَدَّقۡ عَلَیۡنَا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰہَ یَجۡزِی الۡمُتَصَدِّقِیۡنَ ﴿۸۸﴾ قَالَ ہَلۡ عَلِمۡتُمۡ مَّا فَعَلۡتُمۡ
بِیُوۡسُفَ وَ اَخِیۡہِ اِذۡ اَنۡتُمۡ جٰہِلُوۡنَ ﴿۸۹﴾ قَالُوۡۤا ءَاِنَّکَ لَاَنۡتَ یُوۡسُفُ ؕ قَالَ اَنَا یُوۡسُفُ وَ ہٰذَاۤ اَخِیۡ ۫ قَدۡ مَنَّ اللّٰہُ

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عَلَيْنَا ؕ اِنَّهٗ مَنْ يَّتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرْ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿۹۰﴾ قَالُوْا تَاللّٰهِ لَقَدْ اٰثَرَكَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْنَا وَ
اِنْ كُنَّا لَخٰطِـِٕيْنَ ﴿۹۱﴾ قَالَ لَا تَثْرِيْبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ ؕ يَغْفِرُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ ۫ وَ هُوَ اَرْحَمُ الرّٰحِمِيْنَ ﴿۹۲﴾ اِذْهَبُوْا
بِقَمِيْصِيْ هٰذَا فَاَلْقُوْهُ عَلٰى وَجْهِ اَبِيْ يَاْتِ بَصِيْرًا ۚ وَ اْتُوْنِيْ بِاَهْلِكُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿۹۳﴾ وَلَمَّا فَصَلَتِ الْعِيْرُ قَالَ اَبُوْهُمْ
اِنِّيْ لَاَجِدُ رِيْحَ يُوْسُفَ لَوْلَاۤ اَنْ تُفَنِّدُوْنِ ﴿۹۴﴾ قَالُوْا تَاللّٰهِ اِنَّكَ لَفِيْ ضَلٰلِكَ الْقَدِيْمِ ﴿۹۵﴾ فَلَمَّاۤ اَنْ جَآءَ الْبَشِيْرُ
اَلْقٰىهُ عَلٰى وَجْهِهٖ فَارْتَدَّ بَصِيْرًا ۚ قَالَ اَلَمْ اَقُلْ لَّكُمْ ۚ اِنِّيْۤ اَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۹۶﴾ قَالُوْا يٰۤاَبَانَا
اسْتَغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوْبَنَاۤ اِنَّا كُنَّا خٰطِـِٕيْنَ ﴿۹۷﴾ قَالَ سَوْفَ اَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ رَبِّيْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿۹۸﴾ فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوْا
عَلٰى يُوْسُفَ اٰوٰۤى اِلَيْهِ اَبَوَيْهِ وَقَالَ ادْخُلُوْا مِصْرَ اِنْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ اٰمِنِيْنَ ﴿۹۹﴾ وَرَفَعَ اَبَوَيْهِ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَخَرُّوْا لَهٗ
سُجَّدًا ۚ وَقَالَ يٰۤاَبَتِ هٰذَا تَاْوِيْلُ رُءْيَايَ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۫ قَدْ جَعَلَهَا رَبِّيْ حَقًّا ؕ وَقَدْ اَحْسَنَ بِيْۤ اِذْ اَخْرَجَنِيْ مِنَ
السِّجْنِ وَجَآءَ بِكُمْ مِّنَ الْبَدْوِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اَنْ نَّزَغَ الشَّيْطٰنُ بَيْنِيْ وَبَيْنَ اِخْوَتِيْ ؕ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ لَطِيْفٌ لِّمَا يَشَآءُ ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ
الْعَلِيْمُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿۱۰۰﴾ رَبِّ قَدْ اٰتَيْتَنِيْ مِنَ الْمُلْكِ وَ عَلَّمْتَنِيْ مِنْ تَاْوِيْلِ الْاَحَادِيْثِ ۚ فَاطِرَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ
الْاَرْضِ ۫ اَنْتَ وَلِيّٖ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ تَوَفَّنِيْ مُسْلِمًا وَّاَلْحِقْنِيْ بِالصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿۱۰۱﴾

And the king said: "Bring him to me; I shall make him my special person of trust." Then when he conversed with him, he said to him: "Now you will be a man of authority among us and you will be trusted." He said: "Depute me on the treasures of this land; I am one who protects and is also well-aware." (54-55)

And in this way, We gave Joseph political authority in the country; he can pick a position for himself anywhere there. We bless whomsoever We want with Our grace and We do not waste the reward of the thorough. And the reward of the Hereafter is far more than this for those who accepted faith and adhered to piety. (56-57)

And the brothers of Joseph came and met him; he recognized them but they did not recognize him. And when he had their provisions prepared, he said to them: "Next time bring to me your step-brother as well. You do see that I give grain in full measure and am also a very good host. And if you do not bring him to me, then neither shall I have grain for you nor should you come near me." They said: "We shall try to convince his father about him and we shall definitely be able to do this." (58-61)

And he asked his young men: "Place the currency given by them in their saddle-packs as a result of which when they reach their families they recognize them so that they may come again." So, when they reached their father, they said: "Father! We have been denied grain in future. So, let our brother also go along with us that we bring grain, and we promise to protect him." He said: "My trust on you in his matter will be the same as

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the way I trusted you earlier in the matter of his brother. So, God is the best of guardians and of all those who show mercy, He is the Most Merciful." (62-64)

And when they opened their luggage, they saw that their currency had also been returned to them. They cried out: "Father! What more do we need. This currency of ours has also been returned to us. Now we shall go, bring supplies for our family, protect our bother and procure an additional camel-load of grain. This grain is little." The father replied: "I shall never send him with you until you promise me in God's name that you shall definitely bring him back to me, except if you are stranded somewhere." So, when they gave him their firm word, he said: "This promise that we are making, God is its protector." (65-66)

And he directed them: "My sons! All of you do not enter together through the same gate; but go through separately through different gates. And I can be of no benefit to you against God. Authority belongs to God only. I have trusted Him alone and all those who want to trust should trust Him only." And when they entered from where their father had directed them, then this could not have been of avail to them against God; it was only a desire in the heart of Jacob which he fulfilled. And indeed he had the knowledge We had taught him, but most people do not know. (67-68)

And when these people reached Joseph's presence, he gave his brother a special place near himself. He said: "I am your brother. So, do not grieve on what they have been doing." Thus when he had their provisions prepared, he placed a cup in the belongings of his brother. Then a caller called: "O People of the Caravan! It is you who are thieves." They turned back to them and asked: "What have you lost?" They replied: "We are not being able to find the royal goblet. And he who brings it, will get a camel-load of grain; and I take responsibility of this." Joseph's brothers said: "By God! You know that we have not come here to create disorder in the land and we are not those who steal." They said: "If you are proven wrong, then what is the punishment of the thief?" They replied: "The punishment from whose belongings the stolen thing is located is that he himself shall be kept back as his punishment." Thus do We punish such unjust people. Thus before searching their bags, the bag of his brother was searched first. Then he extracted it from the bag of his brother. In this way, We schemed for Joseph. He was not authorized to hold back his brother according to the law of the king, except if God willed. We raise the status one above the other of whomsoever We want and in reality there is a knowledgeable being above every other knowledgeable person. (69-76)

They said: "If he has stolen, then this is no matter of amazement; before this, one of his brothers has also been guilty of stealing." Joseph kept this statement in his heart; he did not reveal it to them. In his heart, he said: "You yourself are very wicked people and God well knows whatever you are saying." They said: " 'Azīz! He has a very old father; so, in his place keep one of us; we see that you are a very virtuous person." He said: "God forbid that we should seize someone else than the person with whom we have found our thing. In such a case, we shall be regarded as very unjust."

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When they lost hope in him, they began consulting one another. A pre-eminent among them said: “Do you not know that your father has taken a firm promise from you in the name of God and before this, the mistake you have committed regarding Joseph is also known to you? Hence, I am not going to leave this land until my father permits me or God makes a judgement for me and He is the best of judges. Go back to your father and tell him: ‘Father! Your son has committed a theft and We have only said what has come to our knowledge. We are not guardians of the unseen. And you can also ask the people of that settlement where we are staying and from the caravan with which we came too. And we are absolutely truthful.’” He said: “In fact, your heart has made up an excuse for you. So, graceful patience is best. Hopefully God will bring all of them to me. Indeed, He is All-Knowing and Wise.” (77-83)

And he turned away his face from them and said: “Alas O Joseph!” – and his eyes had turned white due to grief and he was in a lot of anguish. They said: “By God! You will keep on remembering Joseph only until you become miserable with woe or pass away.” He said: “I complain of my worry and sorrow to God alone and I know from God what you do not. My Sons! Go and search for Joseph and his brother and do not lose hope in God’s mercy. Only the disbelievers lose hope in God’s mercy.” (84-87)

Then when they came to Joseph, they said: “O ‘Azīz! We and our family are in great affliction and we have come with a small amount. So, give us the grain in full and give us in charity too. God rewards those who give in charity.” He said: “Do you just know when being overwhelmed with frenzy what you had done with Joseph and his brother?” They said: “Are you really Joseph?” He replied: “Yes, I am Joseph, and this is my brother. God has been gracious to us. Indeed, those who fear God and remain steadfast, then God does not waste the reward of those who are thorough.” They said: “By God! God has given you superiority over us and indeed it was we who were wrongdoers.” He said: “Now there is no blame on you. May God forgive you! Of all those who show mercy, He is the Most Merciful. Take this shirt of mine and put it on the face of my father; his eyesight will be restored and bring all your family to me.” (88-93)

And when the caravan departed, their father said: “If you do not regard me as insane, I can feel the fragrance of Joseph.” People said: “By God! You are still inflicted with your old insanity.” Then when it happened that the giver of glad tidings arrived, he placed the shirt on Jacob’s face, his eyesight returned. At this, he said: “Did I not tell you that I know from God what you do not know.” They requested: “Father! Pray for the forgiveness of our sins; indeed we were wrongdoers.” He said: “I shall soon pray to my Lord for your forgiveness. Indeed, He alone forgives and is Ever-Merciful.” (94-98)

Then when they came over to Joseph, he gave his parents a place especially near him and said: “Stay in Egypt, if God wills, with peace.” And he made his parents sit on the throne and everyone prostrated before him. And Joseph said: “Father! This is the interpretation of my dream that I had seen earlier. My Lord made it a reality. And He

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very graciously helped me when He took me out of the prison and brought you here from the village after Satan had spread mischief between me and my brothers. Indeed, whatever my Lord desires, He takes care of it very minutely and thoroughly. Indeed, He alone is Knowledgeable and Wise. Lord! You granted me a share in political authority and also taught me from the knowledge of interpreting words. O Creator of the Heavens and the Earth! You alone are my guardian in this world and the next. Make me die on Islam and include me among your righteous people." (99-101)

Explanation

وَقَالَ الۡمَلِكُ ائۡتُوۡنِىۡ بِهٖۤ اَسۡتَخۡلِصۡهُ لِنَفۡسِىۡ ۚ فَلَمَّا كَلَّمَهٗ قَالَ اِنَّكَ الۡيَوۡمَ لَدَيۡنَا مَكِيۡنٌ اَمِيۡنٌ ﴿۵۴﴾[47]

In the first place, the king had become a great admirer of Joseph (sws) for interpreting his dream which none of his learned courtiers could. Such was this interpretation that it satisfied everyone. Then what further impressed him was that Joseph (sws) explained a scheme to combat this horrible drought the dream referred to.

Then on top of these two things, when the king ordered for his release and he did not accept it until the allegations upon him that sent him to prison were investigated, he was totally absolved from them.

Either one of these factors were sufficient to make the king a fan of Joseph (sws); so, if all these three factors came to his knowledge at the same time it was but natural for him to become, in absentia, a fan of Joseph (sws). He thus declared that he was making Joseph (sws) his trusted assistant. In monarchies, all powers are concntrated in the person of the king. So, if he makes someone his trusted assistant and that too with such admiration and regard as the king had for Joseph (sws), it meant that he had announced his intent of consigning all his powers to him together with the announcment of his release.

The last part of the verse alludes to the king's direct conversation with Joseph (sws). Until then, there had not been any direct exchange between the two; some individuals were mediating between them. Though the Qur'ān has just briefly referred to this conversation between the two, it is obvious that they must have discussed matters in detail. Religious and moral issues must have been brought up. Joseph (sws) must have presented his views about the administrative and economic matters facing the country. The true worth of a person is only known after meeting and conversing with him. Thus it seems quite evident that this meeting increased the king's admiration for Joseph (sws). As a result, he offered to virtually consign the reins of his government to him, and left the extent of its acceptance to the discretion of Joseph (sws).

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47. And the king said: "Bring him to me; I shall make him my special person of trust." Then when he conversed with him, he said to him: "Now you will be a man of authority among us and you will be trusted."

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قَالَ اجْعَلْنِيْ عَلٰى خَزَآىِٕنِ الْاَرْضِ ۚ اِنِّيْ حَفِيْظٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿۵۵﴾[48]

The word الْاَرْضِ here refers to Egypt and the word خَزَآىِٕنِ (treasures) refers to the means of production of the country. It should remain clear that this was not a request from Joseph (sws). It was a practical suggestion from him to implement the offer made to him by the king. At the same time, he clarified that he finds in himself the honesty and knowledge needed to go ahead with this implementation. He meant that as a result he had full hopes in himself to undertake this task in the best possible way. This suggestion from Joseph (sws) was in line with the king's desire and he fully satisfied him. In this way, the reins of the country were virtually handed over to Joseph (sws). In the book of Genesis, it is stated:

> So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt." Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his finger and put it on Joseph's finger. He dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. He had him ride in a chariot as his second-in-command, and people shouted before him, "Make way!" Thus he put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, but without your word no one will lift hand or foot in all Egypt." (41:41-44)

وَكَذٰلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوْسُفَ فِي الْاَرْضِ ۚ يَتَبَوَّاُ مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَآءُ ؕ نُصِيْبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَنْ نَّشَآءُ وَلَا نُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿۵۶﴾ وَ لَاَجْرُ الْاٰخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَكَانُوْا يَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿۵۷﴾[49]

The expression يَتَبَوَّاُ مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَآءُ means Joseph (sws) could stay anyehere in the kingdom and visit whichever part of the kingdom he wantes to; he could run the empire any way he wanted and pass orders for whomsoever he wants at whichever place he deems fit. It was incumbent on all the officials of the government to obey his orders.

The words "We bless whomsoever We want with Our grace and We do not waste the reward of the thorough" clarify two facts. Firstly, all sovereignty belongs to God. If He wants to bless someone with His grace, none can stop Him. Whenever He wants, He can take a prisoner out from the prison and consign him the rule of a country. This is just a trivial expression of His power. Second, the thorough are richly rewarded for their deeds. They do face trials. If they remain steadfast in facing them, they are rewarded by God in this world as well as in the next.

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48. He said: "Depute me on the treasures of this land; I am one who protects and is also well-aware."

49. And in this way, We gave Joseph political authority in the country; he can pick a position for himself anywhere there. We bless whomsoever We want with Our grace and We do not waste the reward of the thorough. And the reward of the Hereafter is far more than this for those who accepted faith and adhered to piety.

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وَجَآءَ اِخۡوَةُ يُوۡسُفَ فَدَخَلُوۡا عَلَيۡهِ فَعَرَفَهُمۡ وَهُمۡ لَهٗ مُنۡكِرُوۡنَ ﴿۵۸﴾[50]

It will become evident from the coming verse that Joseph's (sws) brothers had come to obtain grain. This happened seven years after when not only Egypt but also its neighbouring countries like Syria and Palestine had been engulfed by drought. However, because of the effective measure taken by Joseph (sws) in advance, Egypt was not only self-sufficient in its food needs, it was also providing for the needs of the neighbouring countries. It had allowed them to come and purchase grain in a rationed way. It seems that since his brothers belonged to a different country, they had to seek special permission from Joseph (sws) to acquire grain.

If they were not able to recognize Joseph (sws), it was because they had not seen him for more than two decades after casting him into the well. In such a long period of time, a person's appearance changes a lot. Furthermore, even if they did find some resemblance in him, as is evident in verse 90 ahead, how could they have thought that the brother who they had thrown into a well could one day become the king of Egypt.

وَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُمۡ بِجَهَازِهِمۡ قَالَ ائۡتُوۡنِىۡ بِاَخٍ لَّكُمۡ مِّنۡ اَبِيۡكُمۡ ۚ اَلَا تَرَوۡنَ اَنِّىۡۤ اُوۡفِى الۡكَيۡلَ وَاَنَا خَيۡرُ الۡمُنۡزِلِيۡنَ ﴿۵۹﴾ فَاِنۡ لَّمۡ تَاۡتُوۡنِىۡ بِهٖ فَلَا كَيۡلَ لَكُمۡ عِنۡدِىۡ وَلَا تَقۡرَبُوۡنِ ﴿۶۰﴾[51]

It is evident from these verses that a rationing system to give grain was in place in the country. The needy were given this grain in accordance with the number of people in a family. Hence the brothers had to tell them that they also had a step brother at home. At this Joseph (sws), asked them to bring him along the next time. For this, he not only exhorted them, he also threatened them. The exhortation was that he was one gives full share and is the best of hosts. The word كَيۡل actually means a utensil with a known capacity. Here it means the grain a utensil holds. This is the same style in which the content of a thing is referred to by referring to the thing itself. The threat was that if they do not intend to bring their brother, then they should not even come near him.

قَالُوۡا سَنُرَاوِدُ عَنۡهُ اَبَاهُ وَاِنَّا لَفٰعِلُوۡنَ ﴿۶۱﴾[52]

The word مراودت means "to divert attention through sweet-talk."

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50. And the brothers of Joseph came and met him; he recognized them but they did not recognize him.

51. And when he had their provisions prepared, he said to them: "Next time bring to me your step-brother as well. You do see that I give grain in full measure and am also a very good host. And if you do not bring him to me, then neither shall I have grain for you nor should you come near me."

52. They said: "We shall try to convince his father about him and we shall definitely be able to do this."

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Concealed in this sentence was their purport that if they were not able to bring their brother, it would not be their fault. It would only mean that their father had not permitted them and this would be a clear case of compulsion for them. They had some guilt in their mind for what they had done to Joseph (sws) which is evident from their sentence.

وَ قَالَ لِفِتْيٰنِهِ اجْعَلُوْا بِضَاعَتَهُمْ فِيْ رِحَالِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْرِفُوْنَهَآ اِذَا انْقَلَبُوْٓا اِلٰٓى اَهْلِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ [53]

Joseph (sws) did this to induce them to come again.

فَلَمَّا رَجَعُوْٓا اِلٰٓى اَبِيْهِمْ قَالُوْا يٰٓاَبَانَا مُنِعَ مِنَّا الْكَيْلُ فَاَرْسِلْ مَعَنَآ اَخَانَا نَكْتَلْ وَ اِنَّا لَهٗ لَحٰفِظُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ قَالَ هَلْ اٰمَنُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ اِلَّا كَمَآ اَمِنْتُكُمْ عَلٰٓى اَخِيْهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ ؕ فَاللّٰهُ خَيْرٌ حٰفِظًا ۪ وَّ هُوَ اَرْحَمُ الرّٰحِمِيْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾ [54]

It is evident from the last sentence of Jacob (sws) that his trust had on them had been broken and if he had to send Benjamin along with them, he would do it by trusting God and giving him in His protection.

وَ لَمَّا فَتَحُوْا مَتَاعَهُمْ وَجَدُوْا بِضَاعَتَهُمْ رُدَّتْ اِلَيْهِمْ ؕ قَالُوْا يٰٓاَبَانَا مَا نَبْغِيْ ؕ هٰذِهٖ بِضَاعَتُنَا رُدَّتْ اِلَيْنَا ۚ وَ نَمِيْرُ اَهْلَنَا وَ نَحْفَظُ اَخَانَا وَ نَزْدَادُ كَيْلَ بَعِيْرٍ ؕ ذٰلِكَ كَيْلٌ يَّسِيْرٌ ﴿٦٥﴾ [55]

The eloquence of the Qur'ān in this sentence is at its pinnacle for it profoundly reflects the jubilation of the brothers. The co-ordinated sentence of وَنَمِيْرُ اَهْلَنَا has been suppressed here and I have revealed it in the translation.

The verb یمیر means "to provide grain and other things of need to one's family."

The word "camel-load" shows that as per the rationing system implemented by Joseph (sws), visitors from abroad had the permission of acquiring one camel-load of grain per person.

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53. And he asked his young men: "Place the currency given by them in their saddle-packs as a result of which when they reach their families they recognize them so that they may come again."

54. So, when they reached their father, they said: "Father! We have been denied grain in future. So, let our brother also go along with us that we bring grain, and we promise to protect him." He said: "My trust on you in his matter will be the same as the way I trusted you earlier in the matter of his brother. So, God is the best of guardians and of all those who show mercy, He is the Most Merciful."

55. And when they opened their luggage, they saw that their currency had also been returned to them. They cried out: "Father! What more do we need. This currency of ours has also been returned to us. Now we shall go, bring supplies for our family, protect our bother and procure an additional camel-load of grain. This grain is little."

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قَالَ لَنۡ اُرۡسِلَهٗ مَعَكُمۡ حَتّٰى تُؤۡتُوۡنِ مَوۡثِقًا مِّنَ اللّٰهِ لَتَاۡتُنَّنِىۡ بِهٖۤ اِلَّاۤ اَنۡ يُّحَاطَ بِكُمۡ‌ ۚ فَلَمَّاۤ اٰتَوۡهُ مَوۡثِقَهُمۡ قَالَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى مَا نَقُوۡلُ وَكِيۡلٌ ﴿۶۶﴾[56]

Jacob's proposition in sending Benjamin is referred to here.

وَقَالَ يٰبَنِىَّ لَا تَدۡخُلُوۡا مِنۡۢ بَابٍ وَّاحِدٍ وَّادۡخُلُوۡا مِنۡ اَبۡوَابٍ مُّتَفَرِّقَةٍ‌ ؕ وَمَاۤ اُغۡنِىۡ عَنۡكُمۡ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ مِنۡ شَىۡءٍ‌ ؕ اِنِ الۡحُكۡمُ اِلَّا لِلّٰهِ‌ ؕ عَلَيۡهِ تَوَكَّلۡتُ‌ ۚ وَعَلَيۡهِ فَلۡيَتَوَكَّلِ الۡمُتَوَكِّلُوۡنَ ﴿۶۷﴾[57]

The expression مَآ اُغۡنِىۡ عَنۡكُمۡ means "it cannot be of slightest benefit to you."

Jacob gave this suggestion because in times of a drought, the chance of theft and robbery and other similar crimes increase a lot.

It may be kept in mind that in ancient times, a wall would be constructed around every city to secure it from enemy attacks and it would have gates at fixed places. The reason for this suggestion may also be that Jacob (sws) feared that his sons might be assaulted by the rogues and ruffians of the city. If eleven graceful, decent and attractive men enter through a single gate, they could attract attention. It was also possible that they be attacked and looted, and thereby be harmed.

At the same time, Jacob (sws) also clarified that he had given this suggestion to them as something better for them. This advice from him must never be construed by his sons that it could override the will of God, which is certain to be implemented.

وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوۡا مِنۡ حَيۡثُ اَمَرَهُمۡ اَبُوۡهُمۡ‌ ؕ مَا كَانَ يُغۡنِىۡ عَنۡهُمۡ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ مِنۡ شَىۡءٍ اِلَّا حَاجَةً فِىۡ نَفۡسِ يَعۡقُوۡبَ قَضٰٮهَا‌ ؕ وَاِنَّهٗ لَذُوۡ عِلۡمٍ لِّمَا عَلَّمۡنٰهُ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكۡثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعۡلَمُوۡنَ ﴿۶۸﴾[58]

This verse brings out the relationship between a scheme and its fate ordained by God. The former can never stall the latter. No scheme can change fate. However, in spite of this, it is essential that a person make a scheme and take measures according to the circumstances. Here lies the test of his intention and action and on it depend his rank and status in the hereafter. For this reason, it is not permissible for anyone to do

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56. The father replied: "I shall never send him with you until you promise me in God's name that you shall definitely bring him back to me, except if you are stranded somewhere." So, when they gave him their firm word, he said: "This promise that we are making, God is its protector."

57. And he directed them: "My sons! All of you do not enter together through the same gate; but go through separately through different gates. And I can be of no benefit to you against God. Authority belongs to God only. I have trusted Him alone and all those who want to trust should trust Him only."

58. And when they entered from where their father had directed them, then this could not have been of avail to them against God; it was only a desire in the heart of Jacob which he fulfilled. And indeed he had the knowledge We had taught him, but most people do not know.

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nothing and consign himself to fate. In fact, it is essential that he make a plan within the limits prescribed by God and then try his best to implement it and at the same time have this belief that the outcome will depend on the will of God. No one can change His decision.

The sentence "And indeed he had the knowledge We had taught him, but most people do not know" lauds Jacob (sws): he knew how to distinguish between planning and the ordained fate for that planning; this knowledge was taught to him by God. But most people are not aware of this distinction. Either they regard planning to be everything and disregard fate or in the name of accepting whatever fate comes their way do not even strive and make effort.

وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوْا عَلٰى يُوْسُفَ اٰوٰٓى اِلَيْهِ اَخَاهُ قَالَ اِنِّيْٓ اَنَا اَخُوْكَ فَلَا تَبْتَىِٕسْ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾[59]

Joseph (sws) informed Benjamin about this fact in secrecy. Concomitant indications show that at that time he must have also made him aware of the plan he had in mind for keeping him so that he remain assured with what ensues.

فَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُمْ بِجَهَازِهِمْ جَعَلَ السِّقَايَةَ فِيْ رَحْلِ اَخِيْهِ ثُمَّ اَذَّنَ مُؤَذِّنٌ اَيَّتُهَا الْعِيْرُ اِنَّكُمْ لَسٰرِقُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ قَالُوْا وَاَقْبَلُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ مَّاذَا تَفْقِدُوْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ قَالُوْا نَفْقِدُ صُوَاعَ الْمَلِكِ وَلِمَنْ جَآءَ بِهٖ حِمْلُ بَعِيْرٍ وَّاَنَا بِهٖ زَعِيْمٌ ﴿٧٢﴾ قَالُوْا تَاللّٰهِ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَّا جِئْنَا لِنُفْسِدَ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَمَا كُنَّا سٰرِقِيْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾ قَالُوْا فَمَا جَزَآؤُهٗٓ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ كٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾ قَالُوْا جَزَآؤُهٗ مَنْ وُّجِدَ فِيْ رَحْلِهٖ فَهُوَ جَزَآؤُهٗ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ فَبَدَاَ بِاَوْعِيَتِهِمْ قَبْلَ وِعَآءِ اَخِيْهِ ثُمَّ اسْتَخْرَجَهَا مِنْ وِّعَآءِ اَخِيْهِ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ كِدْنَا لِيُوْسُفَ ؕ مَا كَانَ لِيَاْخُذَ اَخَاهُ فِيْ دِيْنِ الْمَلِكِ اِلَّآ اَنْ يَّشَآءَ اللّٰهُ ؕ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجٰتٍ مَّنْ نَّشَآءُ ؕ وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِيْ عِلْمٍ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٧٦﴾[60]

When all the provisions had been prepared, the royal goblet, which was used as a

59. And when these people reached Joseph's presence, he gave his brother a special place near himself. He said: "I am your brother. So, do not grieve on what they have been doing."

60. Thus when he had their provisions prepared, he placed a cup in the belongings of his brother. Then a caller called: "O People of the Caravan! It is you who are thieves." They turned back to them and asked: "What have you lost?" They replied: "We are not being able to find the royal goblet. And he who brings it, will get a camel-load of grain; and I take responsibility of this." Joseph's brothers said: "By God! You know that we have not come here to create disorder in the land and we are not those who steal." They said: "If you are proven wrong, then what is the punishment of the thief?" They replied: "The punishment from whose belongings the stolen thing is located is that he himself shall be kept back as his punishment." Thus do We punish such unjust people. Thus before searching their bags, the bag of his brother was searched first. Then he extracted it from the bag of his brother. In this way, We schemed for Joseph. He was not authorized to hold back his brother according to the law of the king, except if God willed. We raise the status one above the other of whomsoever We want and in reality there is a knowledgeable being above every other knowledgeable person.

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royal scale to gauge the quantity of grain, was placed in the belonging of his brother at the behest of Joseph (sws). The verses go on to describe what then happened.

Here are some important aspects presented in order so that the doubts that may arise in the minds as a result of what Joseph did are resolved.

Firstly, at this stage, Joseph did not want to reveal his identity to his brothers. He actually wanted to investigate if his brothers had undergone some change after perpetrating such a huge crime against him.

Secondly, once Joseph (sws) had Benjamin with him, he did not want to lose him at any cost. He was not prepared to undertake the danger of consigning him to his cruel brothers. He must have thought that though they have brought him because of their greed for more grain but how could they be trusted in their return journey. He suspected the chance of foul play similar to the one he had faced. After all the very motive of jealousy which induced them to this cruelty still existed in the matter of Benjamin.

Thirdly, the law of the land also needed be kept in consideration. Undoubtedly because of the king's extraordinary reverence and regard for Joseph (sws), as mentioned earlier, the latter had the power to do anything. But it was only befitting for him to do something that was according to the law of the land especially when that law was based on justice.

Fourthly, in the varied circumstances that existed at the time, if an effective strategy could have been adopted it had to be employing the skill of double meaning sentences. Such a skill if employed for some evil cause and also has the adulteration of falsehood in it, then it is certainly forbidden. However, if it is for a just cause and also does not have any adulteration of falsehood and deception in it, not only using such a skill is not wrong, employing it at times, especially against enemies becomes essential to achieve a just purpose. Some very subtle and pure examples of using this skill can be found in the life our holy Prophet (sws) too. At such instances, what is said is true in itself but it is said or undertaken in a way that the addressee is led to a different meaning.

Fifthly, after Joseph (sws) had placed the royal goblet in the belongings of his brother, it was he who asked the caller to call out the brothers as thieves and he had a particular connotation of "thief" in his mind. It was not that because they had stolen the royal goblet (which did not) but because of what they did to Joseph (sws): on the pretext of entertainment, they took him away and threw him in a well; later when they returned to their home, they tried to convince their father that a wolf had eaten him. Thus the words of the caller are not "O people of the caravan! you have stolen the royal goblet." The words, on the contrary, are: "O people of the caravan! you are thieves." Obviously, this statement was absolutely true but this could create the misunderstanding that he was blaming them for stealing a particular thing.

Sixthly, it seems that with this proclamation the news of the royal goblet being lost spread among all the royal staff. Since this goblet was initially used for drinking, it must have been expensive. For this reason, its theft was not something improbable. It

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is possible that at that instance, Joseph (sws) himself mentioned the goblet and the royal staff thought on its own that the allegation of theft on the people of the caravan was about the royal goblet.

Seventhly, when the people of the caravan asked the royal staff about the stolen thing, they replied according to the knowledge they had that they had lost the royal goblet. At the same time, one of them said that whoever discovers the goblet and brings it back will be given an extra camel-load of grain as a reward and that he was a guarantor to this. In all probability, this person was the same one who had made the proclamation.

Eighthly, the people of the caravan swore on oath that they had not come to this land to spread disorder or to steal anything. When they were questioned that if their theft was proven, what would be the punishment they should face, after a little hesitation, they replied that the person from whose belongings the stolen thing is discovered could be held back. God says that this is how He deals with such wrongdoers.

Ninthly, after this, Joseph (sws) himself started the search and started it with the other brothers instead of Benjamin so that no doubts are raised. His turn came at the end. Finally, the royal goblet was found with him. In this way, Joseph (sws) was authorized to hold back his brother according to the law of the land as well as because of the confession of his brothers.

Tenthly, this scheme is called كيد by the Qur'ān. It means a secret plan. This secret plan was divinely inspired in the mind of Joseph (sws). As a result of this, he was able to save his brother from danger and also uphold the law of the land.

It is evident from all these details that neither Joseph (sws) nor his staff was ever implicated in any falsehood. However, for a temporary period, Benjamin was stained by face a false allegation. But, in the first place, as stated earlier, he was already informed of the plan. Secondly, whatever was done was done to save him from the blame of his step brothers.

The last sentence "We raise the status one above the other of whomsoever We want and in reality there is a knowledgeable being above every other knowledgeable person" not only refers to the high rank of Joseph (sws), it is also a sarcastic remark on those who think that they have final knowledge. They think that this universe is all what they can see and in inebriated with this notion make fun of many things that are beyond their knowledge. God has stated here that no person should show conceit on his views and conjectures. There is a knowledgeable being who is more knowledgeable than all others and his knowledge is the most complete and perfect. Found in this is also a subtle warning to the Quraysh who are being narrated this anecdote: they should not be misled by the circumstances of God's Messenger they are witnessing at that time. Only God knows the true circumstances. He knows what lies in store as well as how light will emerge from the darkness that they are witnessing and how the way to success will be paved for Islam and its messenger.

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قَالُوْٓا اِنْ يَّسْرِقْ فَقَدْ سَرَقَ اَخٌ لَّهٗ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ فَاَسَرَّهَا يُوْسُفُ فِيْ نَفْسِهٖ وَلَمْ يُبْدِهَا لَهُمْ ۚ قَالَ اَنْتُمْ شَرٌّ مَّكَانًا ۚ وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَصِفُوْنَ ﴿۷۷﴾[61]

These words spoken by the brothers of Joseph (sws) were meant to conceal their embarrassment. In this way, they wanted to give the impression that Joseph (sws) was their step brother and had inherited this tendency of stealing from his mother. These words saddened Joseph (sws) but he just spoke to himself in his heart.

قَالُوْا يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْعَزِيْزُ اِنَّ لَهٗٓ اَبًا شَيْخًا كَبِيْرًا فَخُذْ اَحَدَنَا مَكَانَهٗ ۚ اِنَّا نَرٰىكَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿۷۸﴾[62]

These words were meant to flatter Joseph (sws): they addressed him in a very meek way with the title of ‘Azīz, which was reserved for high officials of Egypt.

قَالَ مَعَاذَ اللّٰهِ اَنْ نَّاْخُذَ اِلَّا مَنْ وَّجَدْنَا مَتَاعَنَا عِنْدَهٗٓ ۙ اِنَّآ اِذًا لَّظٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿۷۹﴾[63]

The carefully chosen words of Joseph (sws) may be noted here. He did not say “we seize someone other than him who has stolen our goblet.” On the contrary, his words are: “we seize someone other than him who has our goblet.”

فَلَمَّا اسْتَيْـَٔسُوْا مِنْهُ خَلَصُوْا نَجِيًّا ۭ قَالَ كَبِيْرُهُمْ اَلَمْ تَعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ اَبَاكُمْ قَدْ اَخَذَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَّوْثِقًا مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَمِنْ قَبْلُ مَا فَرَّطْتُّمْ فِيْ يُوْسُفَ ۚ فَلَنْ اَبْرَحَ الْاَرْضَ حَتّٰى يَاْذَنَ لِيْٓ اَبِيْٓ اَوْ يَحْكُمَ اللّٰهُ لِيْ ۚ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحٰكِمِيْنَ ﴿۸۰﴾[64]

There is difference of opinion regard the connotation of the word كَبِيْر. Does it refer to Reuben who was the eldest or to Judas who was pre-eminent among the brothers with regard to intellect and understanding. In my opinion, the word refers to eminence in rank and status as is the case with its usage in verse 63 of Sūrah al-Anbiyā’: بَلْ فَعَلَهٗ كَبِيْرُهُمْ (in fact, their eminent one has done it). If the purpose was to refer to the eldest, then the right word would have been اَكْبَرُهُمْ. Thus if Judas is understood to be implied here, then

61. They said: “If he has stolen, then this is no matter of amazement; before this, one of his brothers has also been guilty of stealing.” Joseph kept this statement in his heart; he did not reveal it to them. In his heart, he said: “You yourself are very wicked people and God well knows whatever you are saying.”

62. They said: “ ‘Azīz! He has a very old father; so, in his place keep one of us; we see that you are a very virtuous person.”

63. He said: “God forbid that we should seize someone else than the person with whom we have found our thing. In such a case, we shall be regarded as very unjust.”

64. When they lost hope in him, they began consulting one another. A pre-eminent among them said: “Do you not know that your father has taken a firm promise from you in the name of God and before this, the mistake you have committed regarding Joseph is also known to you? Hence, I am not going to leave this land until my father permits me or God makes a judgement for me and He is the best of judges.

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this is more probable. The Torah also mentions his name. It seems that he had a soft spot in his heart for Joseph (sws). It was probably he who had also given the suggestion to throw him in the well when others were opining to kill him. He had contended that in this way some caravan would be able to extract him. Thus, they will not be implicated in the sin of killing him and at the same time also achieve their purpose.

اِرْجِعُوْٓا اِلٰٓى اَبِيْكُمْ فَقُوْلُوْا يٰٓاَبَانَآ اِنَّ ابْنَكَ سَرَقَ ۚ وَمَا شَهِدْنَآ اِلَّا بِمَا عَلِمْنَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِلْغَيْبِ حٰفِظِيْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَسْـَٔلِ الْقَرْيَةَ الَّتِيْ كُنَّا فِيْهَا وَالْعِيْرَ الَّتِيْٓ اَقْبَلْنَا فِيْهَا ۭ وَاِنَّا لَصٰدِقُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾[65]

The brothers followed the advice of Judas and reported what happened to their father. The succeeding verses now refer to his father's impressions.

قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ اَنْفُسُكُمْ اَمْرًا ۭ فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيْلٌ ۭ عَسَى اللّٰهُ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَنِيْ بِهِمْ جَمِيْعًا ۭ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْعَلِيْمُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٨٣﴾[66]

The word تسویل means "to make something easy and luring."

The expression سَوَّلَ لَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ means "Satan led him astray and induced him to do a certain task." Thus سَوَّلَتْ لَهُ نَفْسُهُ كَذَا means "he made a certain task easy and attractive for him so that he undertakes it."

The expression فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيْلٌ (graceful patience) is adjectivally undefined and is a inchoative of a suppressed enunciative. In other words what is implied is that graceful patience is the best thing to adopt in these circumstances. Such patience is one which is devoid of inappropriate expressions of sorrow. Everyone becomes composed and patient after raising a hue and cry. However, the Qur'ānic term here means that a person bears sorrow in such a way that he does not complain of it and his body language is also not unbefitting.

In my opinion, the words ascribed to Jacob (sws) in this verse were spoken in his heart and they were not addressed to his sons. The word قَالَ (he said) is also used in this connotation. After expressing his sorrow in his heart, a great ray of hope appeared in his heart that God will gather all of them around him because He is knowledgeable and wise. Just as intensity in humidity increases the hope for rain, similarly, the intensity in trials and tests increases the hope for God's mercy. Dedicated servants of God are aware of the fact that He does not test a soul beyond its capacity. So, when they see that matters are getting beyond them, they think that God's help is near. When Jacob (sws) saw that after Joseph (sws) he had also lost Benjamin and Judas, a

65. Go back to your father and tell him: 'Father! Your son has committed a theft and We have only said what has come to our knowledge. We are not guardians of the unseen. And you can also ask the people of that settlement where we are staying and from the caravan with which we came too. And we are absolutely truthful.'"

66. He said: "In fact, your heart has made up an excuse for you. So, graceful patience is best. Hopefully God will bring all of them to me. Indeed, He is All-Knowing and Wise."

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ray of hope sparked in him that the time for everyone to gather was at hand. As for the question that how this would happen, its answer lies with the being who is All-Knowing and Wise God. A person must trust Him.

وَتَوَلّٰى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يٰٓاَسَفٰى عَلٰى يُوْسُفَ وَابْيَضَّتْ عَيْنٰهُ مِنَ الْحُزْنِ فَهُوَ كَظِيْمٌ ﴿٨٤﴾[67]

The expression تَوَلّٰى عَنْهُمْ means that after this incident Jacob became saddened from his sons and isolated himself in a corner. It revived his grief for Joseph (sws).

It may be kept in mind that all this is a description of his state when he was in seclusion. There was none between him and God. He has referred to this later in verse 86 by the words: اِنَّمَآ اَشْكُوْا بَثِّيْ وَحُزْنِيْٓ اِلَى اللّٰهِ وَاَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ (I complain of my worry and sorrow to God alone and I know from God what you do not.). Sharing one's sorrow with God is not a bad thing at all. In fact, it is something good. The reason for Joseph's (sws) grief was not hopelessness; it was in fact hope. A person expects that the more he cries and pleads before his Lord, the more it will stir His mercy. The pleading that is prohibited is one which is done before others and which is an expression of hopelessness instead of hope; it is one in which a person shows impatience and that too in a manner which is not befitting to his faith and trust in God.

It is perfectly natural that this fresh incident also revived Joseph's (sws) sorrow in the heart of Jacob (sws). In the first place, what happened to Benjamin was not the same as what happened to Joseph (sws). Secondly, the deep attachment which Jacob (sws) had for him was not because he was just his son, but because of his lofty traits. This made Joseph (sws) so endeared to him that the rest of the brothers became jealous of Joseph (sws), who ultimately had to face severe trials from his brothers.

If the eyes turn white because of the intensity of sorrow, this is no expression of exaggeration; it is a statement of fact. Grief affects the blackness of the cornea and the internal parts of the eye. The word كَظِيْمٌ is meant to praise Jacob's (sws) patience: he remained in anguish because of continuously bearing grief in his heart. The last *alif* in يٰٓاَسَفٰى connotes an annexure.

قَالُوْا تَاللّٰهِ تَفْتَؤُا تَذْكُرُ يُوْسُفَ حَتّٰى تَكُوْنَ حَرَضًا اَوْ تَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْهٰلِكِيْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾[68]

In the Arabic language, ت as in تَاللّٰهِ is also used for an oath the way و is used. The word تَفْتَؤُا means لَا تَزَال. The word حَرَضٌ is used for a person who is bear death and has become incapacitated.

The advice of the brothers cited here though apparently seems sympathetic, it actually smacks of jealousy which has been the reason for all their previously

67. And he turned away his face from them and said: "Alas O Joseph!" – and his eyes had turned white due to grief and he was in a lot of anguish.

68. They said: "By God! You will keep on remembering Joseph only until you become miserable with woe or pass away."

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mentioned undertakings. They had sought to kill Joseph (sws) to gain attention of their father. Now they saw that their evil plan had ended up being counter productive. If ever there was any semblance of their father's affection for them, it too had gone away. They saw that the only thing their father did all day long was to remember Joseph (sws) in seclusion, cry for him and beg for God's help.

قَالَ اِنَّمَآ اَشۡكُوۡا بَثِّىۡ وَحُزۡنِىۡۤ اِلَى اللّٰهِ وَاَعۡلَمُ مِنَ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا تَعۡلَمُوۡنَ ﴿۸۶﴾[69]

The precise meaning of the word بَثّ is "worry."

The crying and pleading which is unbecoming is one that is done before those other than God. If a person weeps before his Lord, then this nothing bad; in fact, it is a form of worship. Jacob (sws) meant that his sons should not think that what he was doing is not beneficial; his experience of God is different from theirs. He knows from God what they do not and they should leave him to himself. He has not lost hope in God's mercy.

يٰبَنِىَّ اذۡهَبُوۡا فَتَحَسَّسُوۡا مِنۡ يُّوۡسُفَ وَاَخِيۡهِ وَلَا تَايۡـَٔسُوۡا مِنۡ رَّوۡحِ اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّهٗ لَا يَايۡـَٔسُ مِنۡ رَّوۡحِ اللّٰهِ اِلَّا الۡقَوۡمُ الۡكٰفِرُوۡنَ ﴿۸۷﴾[70]

When matters reached the point that Jacob (sws) disclosed this secret before his sons that he did not despair God' mercy, he uttered the above cited words too in a very affectionate way. He meant that if they try real hard to find Joseph (sws) and Benajamin and even risk their lives for it, they will be helped by God's mercy and all their hardships would be eased.

فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوۡا عَلَيۡهِ قَالُوۡا يٰۤاَيُّهَا الۡعَزِيۡزُ مَسَّنَا وَاَهۡلَنَا الضُّرُّ وَجِئۡنَا بِبِضَاعَةٍ مُّزۡجٰىةٍ فَاَوۡفِ لَنَا الۡكَيۡلَ وَتَصَدَّقۡ عَلَيۡنَا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَجۡزِى الۡمُتَصَدِّقِيۡنَ ﴿۸۸﴾[71]

The word ضُرّ refers to hardship suffered as a result of hunger and drought.

بِضَاعَةٍ مُّزۡجٰىةٍ means a provision that no one accepts; one which is trivial and not even needed. It is evident from this expression that instead of currency, the brothers had taken something in kind which was not in any demand.

The effect that the father's appeal had on them cannot be gauged here; however, the need for grain forced them to go to Egypt once again. They went to Joseph (sws) and this time addressed him with his official title.

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69. He said: "I complain of my worry and sorrow to God alone and I know from God what you do not.

70. My Sons! Go and search for Joseph and his brother and do not lose hope in God's mercy. Only the disbelievers lose hope in God's mercy."

71. Then when they came to Joseph, they said: "O 'Azīz! We and our family are in great affliction and we have come with a small amount. So, give us the grain in full and give us in charity too. God rewards those who give in charity."

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قَالَ هَلۡ عَلِمۡتُمۡ مَّا فَعَلۡتُمۡ بِيُوۡسُفَ وَاَخِيۡهِ اِذۡ اَنۡتُمۡ جٰهِلُوۡنَ ﴿۸۹﴾[72]

Joseph was a decent and upright bother. His heart shook when he saw his brothers in such a bad shape and when they earnestly begged him in particular for charity. His brothers had been very pompous and boastful of their status but now circumstances had changed so much that they did not feel any shame even in begging for charity. The situation at hand impacted him so deeply that he decided to reveal his identity.

قَالُوۡۤا ءَاِنَّكَ لَاَنۡتَ يُوۡسُفُ ؕ قَالَ اَنَا يُوۡسُفُ وَهٰذَاۤ اَخِىۡ ۖ قَدۡ مَنَّ اللّٰهُ عَلَيۡنَا ؕ اِنَّهٗ مَنۡ يَّتَّقِ وَيَصۡبِرۡ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُضِيۡعُ اَجۡرَ الۡمُحۡسِنِيۡنَ ﴿۹۰﴾[73]

Evident from these words of the brothers is that in their initial meetings, they too suspected from his appearance, face and style that he was in fact Joseph (sws). However, so huge was the disconnect between the well of Canaan in which they had thrown him and the seat of governance he now sat on that they could never have actually come to believe what they suspected to be true. People who cannot look beyond the apparent can never imagine such manifestations of God's power. So the brothers continued to ward off what they suspected and thought their imagination was just making a wrong estimation.

The answer given by Joseph (sws) is the real essence of the whole anecdote and it actually forms the theme of the *sūrah*, as has been indicated before. The word احسان (thoroughness) here has been mentioned as a basic pre-requisite for the fear of God and remaining steadfast. In other words, only that fear of God and steadfastness is acceptable to Him which has the essence of a person being thorough and has these two traits to such an extent as if he is seeing God and has the conviction that if he is not being able to see God, then God is seeing him nevertheless.

قَالُوۡا تَاللّٰهِ لَقَدۡ اٰثَرَكَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيۡنَا وَاِنۡ كُنَّا لَخٰطِـئِيۡنَ ﴿۹۱﴾[74]

The word ایثار means "to give preference."

Their acceptance of mistake meant that they did all this because of their anger and grief on their father giving Joseph (sws) preference over them. God by giving him this preference made them realize their mistake. They acknowledged that he deserved this status.

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72. He said: "Do you just know when being overwhelmed with frenzy what you had done with Joseph and his brother?"

73. They said: "Are you really Joseph?" He replied: "Yes, I am Joseph, and this is my brother. God has been gracious to us. Indeed, those who fear God and remain steadfast, then God does not waste the reward of those who are thorough."

74. They said: "By God! God has given you superiority over us and indeed it was we who were wrongdoers."

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قَالَ لَا تَثْرِيْبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ ؕ يَغْفِرُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ ۫ وَهُوَ اَرْحَمُ الرّٰحِمِيْنَ ﴿۹۲﴾ 75

The word تَثْرِيْب means "to blame someone for something blameworthy."

If someone accepts his mistake with true regret, a person as noble as Joseph (sws) is bound to forgive him and forgiveness from God too can be expected because He is the most merciful.

Here it may be kept in mind that these words were also uttered by Prophet Muḥammad (sws) at the conquest of Makkah for the leaders of the Quraysh who had continued to be his belligerent enemies. When these people came to the Prophet's presence, he asked them if they knew what would happen to them. They replied that he was a courteous brother and the son of a courteous brother. At this, he said to them that he would say the same words to them as the ones Joseph (sws) had said to his brothers that they now have no blame on them and were free to go.

اِذْهَبُوْا بِقَمِيْصِيْ هٰذَا فَاَلْقُوْهُ عَلٰى وَجْهِ اَبِيْ يَاْتِ بَصِيْرًا ۚ وَاْتُوْنِيْ بِاَهْلِكُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿۹۳﴾ 76

The sole remedy for the eyes that have become weak because of grief and weeping, as is mentioned earlier in verse 84, is that something come before them that not only washes away this grief but also provides such happiness that revives a dead soul. Joseph (sws) had come to know of the dire state of his father through Benjamin: he had shed so many tears that his eyes had become white. Thus he adopted the measure the verse mentions.

Here this also needs to be kept in mind that the greatest sorrow inflicted on Jacob (sws) was through the shirt of Joseph (sws) which was stained with fake blood and presented to him. He was told that Joseph (sws) had bee devoured by a wolf; now the greatest happiness of his life was also coming before him in the form of a garment from Joseph (sws).

Why did Joseph (sws) send his shirt that had touched his body as a sign? And how did this give rise to the effect in the shirt that Jacob's eyesight was restored? Neither can everyone solve this question nor can everyone understand its answer. They relate to emotions and the emotions too of such noble souls: on the one hand is Jacob (sws) and on the other is Joseph (sws). We commoners can say nothing in such matters except that the marvels of the effects of such pure emotions manifest themselves in such amazing forms that intellect is unable to decipher them.

In the last part of the verse, parents are not mentioned in words because they are understood. It is quite obvious that the real purpose was to call them. The rest of the lot was secondary.

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75. He said: "Now there is no blame on you. May God forgive you! Of all those who show mercy, He is the Most Merciful.

76. Take this shirt of mine and put it on the face of my father; his eyesight will be restored and bring all your family to me."

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وَلَمَّا فَصَلَتِ الْعِيْرُ قَالَ اَبُوْهُمْ اِنِّيْ لَاَجِدُ رِيْحَ يُوْسُفَ لَوْلَآ اَنْ تُفَنِّدُوْنِ ﴿٩٤﴾[77]

The verb فَصَلَ means "to depart from a place." The word تفنید means to view someone as worthless and foolish and thereby regard his opinion to be incorrect.

Jacob (sws) was a prophet of God. The senses and faculties of the individuals God chooses as His prophets and messengers should not be considered analogous to our senses and faculties. In times of crisis, even the faculties of a common person become profound because of the intensity and focus. It is thus no matter of amazement that a God's prophet become aware of the fragrance of his son.

قَالُوْا تَاللّٰهِ اِنَّكَ لَفِيْ ضَلٰلِكَ الْقَدِيْمِ ﴿٩٥﴾[78]

These words were precisely the ones Jacob (sws) had anticipated and feared from those who heard his own expressed in the previous verse

فَلَمَّآ اَنْ جَآءَ الْبَشِيْرُ اَلْقٰىهُ عَلٰى وَجْهِهٖ فَارْتَدَّ بَصِيْرًا ۚ قَالَ اَلَمْ اَقُلْ لَّكُمْ ۚ اِنِّيْٓ اَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٩٦﴾[79]

In the expression فَلَمَّآ اَنْ جَآءَ الْبَشِيْرُ a verb is supressed after the word اَنْ.

The words "I know from God what you do not know" refer to what was said earlier in verse 86. When what he had said actually happend, he was overjoyed and also taught his sons that they must not lead their lives while being slaves to the apparent; they should also have faith in what is hidden in this apparent from among the acts of God.

قَالُوْا يٰٓاَبَانَا اسْتَغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوْبَنَآ اِنَّا كُنَّا خٰطِـِٕيْنَ ﴿٩٧﴾[80]

After seeing all this, the brothers realized their foolishness and just as they had confessed their mistake before Joseph (sws), as referred to in verse 91, they also confessed it before their father and requested him to seek forgiveness for their sins.

قَالَ سَوْفَ اَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ رَبِّيْ ۭ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٩٨﴾[81]

The word سَوْفَ (soon) refers to the fact that Jacob (sws) had promised to supplicate for them with special focus at a particular time. He did not merely say that may God

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77. And when the caravan departed, their father said: "If you do not regard me as insane, I can feel the fragrance of Joseph."

78. People said: "By God! You are still inflicted with your old insanity."

79. Then when it happened that the giver of glad tidings arrived, he placed the shirt on Jacob's face, his eyesight returned. At this, he said: "Did I not tell you that I know from God what you do not know."

80. They requested: "Father! Pray for the forgiveness of our sins; indeed we were wrongdoers."

81. He said: "I shall soon pray to my Lord for your forgiveness. Indeed, He alone forgives and is Ever-Merciful."

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forgive them. It is evident from this that if a person is ashamed of his sins, he can also ask the righteous to supplicate for him and such a supplication is also accepted. The second thing evident is that though a person can supplicate before God all the time; however, special focus and a particular time and place also play a role in the acceptance of a supplication.

فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوْا عَلٰى يُوْسُفَ اٰوٰٓى اِلَيْهِ اَبَوَيْهِ وَقَالَ ادْخُلُوْا مِصْرَ اِنْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ اٰمِنِيْنَ ﴿۹۹﴾[82]

Because of the presence of concomitant indications a part of the anecdote is suppressed here viz. the brothers and their parents along with their own families reached Egypt in compliance with the orders of Joseph (sws).

Joseph's words: "Stay in Egypt, if God wills, with peace" are meant to welcome his parents.

According to the Bible, when they arrived, Joseph (sws) welcomed them by coming out of the city and escorted them with such splendour into the city that it became a festive occasion.

The word اَبَوَيْهِ is used to express the dominant element because it is evident from the Bible that Joseph's mother had passed away. He had been raised by his step-mother who was also his paternal aunt.

وَرَفَعَ اَبَوَيْهِ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَخَرُّوْا لَهٗ سُجَّدًا ۚ وَقَالَ يٰٓاَبَتِ هٰذَا تَاْوِيْلُ رُءْيَايَ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۡ قَدْ جَعَلَهَا رَبِّيْ حَقًّا ۭ وَقَدْ اَحْسَنَ بِيْٓ اِذْ اَخْرَجَنِيْ مِنَ السِّجْنِ وَجَآءَ بِكُمْ مِّنَ الْبَدْوِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اَنْ نَّزَغَ الشَّيْطٰنُ بَيْنِيْ وَبَيْنَ اِخْوَتِيْ ۭ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ لَطِيْفٌ لِّمَا يَشَاۗءُ ۭ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْعَلِيْمُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿۱۰۰﴾[83]

The "throne" here does not refer to the royal throne but to the throne on which Joseph (sws) would sit to decide various cases and disputes. It seems that in those times, ministers and high officials would sit on thrones.

The word خَرَّ means to fall from the top towards the bottom and prostration here means to bow in respect; placing one's forhead on the ground is not its essential part; it is its ultimate form. When it occurs with the word خَرَّ it means to bend spontaneously regardless whether it is of the form of bowing or of prostration. It is evident from the Torah that in those times showing respect for elders in this manner

82. Then when they came over to Joseph, he gave his parents a place especially near him and said: "Stay in Egypt, if God wills, with peace."

83. And he made his parents sit on the throne and everyone prostrated before him. And Joseph said: "Father! This is the interpretation of my dream that I had seen earlier. My Lord made it a reality. And He very graciously helped me when He took me out of the prison and brought you here from the village after Satan had spread mischief between me and my brothers. Indeed, whatever my Lord desires, He takes care of it very minutely and thoroughly. Indeed, He alone is Knowledgeable and Wise."

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was very common; however, it was of the form of kneeling and not prostration. If someone intepretes this word to mean prostration in the ceremonial sense, even then it does not make any difference because prostration per se does not constitute polytheism; it is rather its form and expression and these forms have been prohibited in the absolute sense in last complete religion of Islam.

Joseph (sws) shared his throne with his parents as a mark of respect. The rest of the people must have sat where common people generally sit. It seems that after this Joseph (sws) appeared and, as was the custom, his courtiers and attendees bowed before him in respect. Such was the aura created that these people too spontaneously bowed in respect.

In the expression وَقَالَ يٰٓاَبَتِ the ت is a substitute for ی.

The whole episode of Joseph (sws) is a testimony to the last sentence "indeed, whatever my Lord desires, He takes care of it very minutely and thoroughly." The fact is that God creates such subtle ways of fruition for certain tasks through His knowledge and wisdom that cannot even be imagined.

رَبِّ قَدْ اٰتَيْتَنِيْ مِنَ الْمُلْكِ وَعَلَّمْتَنِيْ مِنْ تَاْوِيْلِ الْاَحَادِيْثِ ۚ فَاطِرَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۭ اَنْتَ وَلِيّٖ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ تَوَفَّنِيْ مُسْلِمًا وَّاَلْحِقْنِيْ بِالصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿١٠١﴾[84]

Joseph's (sws) heart becomes replete with gratitude when he sees what has happened and he utters these words as a result.

Section VI: Verses (102-111)

Coming up are the closing verses of the sūrah. In them, the Prophet (sws) is addressed and given assurance; at the same time, the Quraysh are threatened that if they do not learn a lesson from the history of ancient nations, they must be prepared to meet their fate too.

Text and Translation

ذٰلِكَ مِنْ اَنْۢبَاۗءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوْحِيْهِ اِلَيْكَ ۚ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ اِذْ اَجْمَعُوْٓا اَمْرَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَمْكُرُوْنَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ وَمَآ اَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتَ بِمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَمَا تَسْـَٔـلُهُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ ۭ اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ وَكَاَيِّنْ مِّنْ اٰيَةٍ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ يَمُرُّوْنَ عَلَيْهَا وَهُمْ عَنْهَا مُعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ اَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللّٰهِ اِلَّا وَهُمْ مُّشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

84. "Lord! You granted me a share in political authority and also taught me from the knowledge of interpreting words. O Creator of the Heavens and the Earth! You alone are my guardian in this world and the next. Make me die on Islam and include me among your righteous people."

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فَاَمِنُوْٓا اَنْ تَاْتِيَهُمْ غَاشِيَةٌ مِّنْ عَذَابِ اللّٰهِ اَوْ تَاْتِيَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً وَّهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿۱۰۷﴾ قُلْ هٰذِهٖ
سَبِيْلِيْٓ اَدْعُوْٓا اِلَى اللّٰهِ ۣ عَلٰى بَصِيْرَةٍ اَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِيْ ؕ وَسُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ وَمَآ اَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿۱۰۸﴾ وَمَآ
اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ اِلَّا رِجَالًا نُّوْحِيْٓ اِلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ اَهْلِ الْقُرٰى ؕ اَفَلَمْ يَسِيْرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ؕ وَلَدَارُ الْاٰخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا ؕ اَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿۱۰۹﴾ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا اسْتَيْـَٔسَ الرُّسُلُ وَظَنُّوْٓا
اَنَّهُمْ قَدْ كُذِبُوْا جَآءَهُمْ نَصْرُنَا ۙ فَنُجِّيَ مَنْ نَّشَآءُ ؕ وَلَا يُرَدُّ بَاْسُنَا عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿۱۱۰﴾ لَقَدْ كَانَ فِيْ
قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِّاُولِي الْاَلْبَابِ ؕ مَا كَانَ حَدِيْثًا يُّفْتَرٰى وَلٰكِنْ تَصْدِيْقَ الَّذِيْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيْلَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّ
هُدًى وَّرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿۱۱۱﴾

This anecdote is from among the news of the unknown which We are revealing to you. And you were not present at that time when they had firmly decided and they were indulging in a conspiracy. (102)

And the majority of these people shall not accept faith however much you may desire. And you are not asking for any remuneration from them. This is only a reminder for the people of the world. And there are so many signs in the earth and the heavens on which they pass by and pay no heed. And most of them believe in God while associating partners with Him. Then do these people have no fear that some calamity of God's punishment or the Day of Judgement suddenly come to them and they are absolutely unaware of it? (103-107)

Say: This is my way; I call towards God with full insight and those too who follow me. And God is exalted and I am not from among the polytheists. (108)

And before you also, whoever We sent as messengers were human beings from these settlements; We would send Our revelations to them. Have these people not walked about in the land so that they could have seen the fate of those who were before them. And the Hereafter is better for those who are God-conscious. Then do you not understand? Until when matters reached the extent that messengers lost hope in their nations and people too thought that they were given false warnings, Our help came to them. Then they were saved whom We wanted and Our torment cannot be warded off from the wrongdoers. There is a great lesson in these anecdotes for people of intellect. This Qur'ān is not something concocted; in fact, it substantiates what is before it and is a detail of everything, and is a guidance and mercy for those who believe. (109-111)

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Explanation

ذٰلِكَ مِنۡ اَنۡۢبَآءِ الۡغَيۡبِ نُوۡحِيۡهِ اِلَيۡكَ ۚ وَمَا كُنۡتَ لَدَيۡهِمۡ اِذۡ اَجۡمَعُوۡۤا اَمۡرَهُمۡ وَهُمۡ يَمۡكُرُوۡنَ ﴿۱۰۲﴾[85]

The demonstrative pronoun ذٰلِكَ (this) refers to the anecdote that has just been narrated. The Prophet (sws) had no way of knowing it. It was merely God's grace that he came to know about it through divine revelation. He was not with the brothers of Joseph (sws) when they were conspiring against Joseph (sws). They had different views. Finally, they agreed to throw him in a well.

It may be kept in mind that even if Joseph's (sws) anecdote is mentioned in the Torah, the Prophet (sws) had no means of knowing it since he was unlettered. Moreover, there is a world of difference at every step between the account of the Qur'ān and that of the Bible. Any person who reflects on all these differences will be left with no option but to confess that the Qur'ānic account is more logical and closer to the human nature because it is based directly on God's revelation.

وَمَاۤ اَكۡثَرُ النَّاسِ وَلَوۡ حَرَصۡتَ بِمُؤۡمِنِيۡنَ ﴿۱۰۳﴾[86]

The verse implies that if people have the ability to accept the truth, then this anecdote is enough to prove that the Qur'ān is from God. Both the People of the Book and the Quraysh will find conclusive arguments in it but they have lost their ability to accept the truth. Hence whatever the Prophet (sws) may do to make them accept faith, their majority will remain deprived of it. The reason for their not accepting faith is not that they have any doubt in the Qur'ān being the book of God but because their ability to accept the truth has died.

وَمَا تَسۡـَٔـلُهُمۡ عَلَيۡهِ مِنۡ اَجۡرٍ ؕ اِنۡ هُوَ اِلَّا ذِكۡرٌ لِّلۡعٰلَمِيۡنَ ﴿۱۰۴﴾[87]

This verse sounds an assurance to the Prophet: if these people do not profess belief, why should he be so worried. He is in fact presenting God's treasure to them and not asking for any reward in return so that if they do not accept it, he will be inflicted with loss. Deprivation is theirs and not his. The Qur'ān is only a reminder for people. He who accepts it will benefit himself and he who does not will himself bear its consequences. The Prophet's responsibility is to only deliver the Qur'ān.

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85. This anecdote is from among the news of the unknown which We are revealing to you. And you were not present at that time when they had firmly decided and they were indulging in a conspiracy.

86. And the majority of these people shall not accept faith however much you may desire.

87. And you are not asking for any remuneration from them. This is only a reminder for the people of the world.

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88 وَكَاَيِّنْ مِّنْ اٰيَةٍ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ يَمُرُّوْنَ عَلَيْهَا وَهُمْ عَنْهَا مُعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿١٠٥﴾

The verse implies that if they are not accepting faith, it is not because they have not been shown any sign as per their demand. In reality, they do not have the eyes to see signs and learn a lesson from them. Otherwise, there are numerous signs in the heavens and the earth which they pass by. If they had eyes, they would have learnt a lesson from them. In other words, in this aspect too it is neither the Prophet's fault nor that of the Qur'ān's. The real fault lies with them. They are not willing to use their eyes.

It may be kept in mind that the Qur'ān would inform them that if they did not profess faith in the Prophet (sws), God's punishment would visit them. In reply, they would say why a sign of the punishment is not shown to them. This verse actually is a rejoinder to this demand. There are several signs around them that are enough to open their eyes; however, they only regard that sign to be a sign that visits them.

89 وَمَا يُؤْمِنُ اَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللّٰهِ اِلَّا وَهُمْ مُّشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

This verse points to another big reason for they not professing faith in the Qur'ān: those among them who do believe in God, they also believe that He has many partners and intercessors. It is their belief that if God would want to seize them for some misdeed, these partners and intercessors would save them from His grasp. In the presence of this misguided belief, how can they believe in the Qur'ān.

90 فَاَمِنُوْٓا اَنْ تَاْتِيَهُمْ غَاشِيَةٌ مِّنْ عَذَابِ اللّٰهِ اَوْ تَاْتِيَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً وَّهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿١٠٧﴾

This question carries a warning. If the case is what the verse points to, then soon they will meet their fate.

91 قُلْ هٰذِهٖ سَبِيْلِيْٓ اَدْعُوْٓا اِلَى اللّٰهِ ۣ عَلٰى بَصِيْرَةٍ اَنَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِيْ ۭ وَسُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ وَمَآ اَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

The root of all their ailments was polytheism. So, once it came up, a complete acquittal from it was announced from the tongue of the Prophet (sws)

The implication of the verse is that the Prophet's opponents should not expect that he will soften his stance or tolerate any reluctance. Exalted is God from the filth of

88. And there are so many signs in the earth and the heavens on which they pass by and pay no heed.

89. And most of them believe in God while associating partners with Him.

90. Then do these people have no fear that some calamity of God's punishment or the Day of Judgement suddenly come to them and they are absolutely unaware of it?

91. Say: This is my way; I call towards God with full insight and those too who follow me. And God is exalted and I am not from among the polytheists.

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polytheism and the Prophet (sws) is not a polytheist. He has declared his acquittal from it.

وَ مَآ اَرۡسَلۡنَا مِنۡ قَبۡلِكَ اِلَّا رِجَالًا نُّوۡحِیۡۤ اِلَیۡهِمۡ مِّنۡ اَهۡلِ الۡقُرٰی ؕ اَفَلَمۡ یَسِیۡرُوۡا فِی الۡاَرۡضِ فَیَنۡظُرُوۡا کَیۡفَ کَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِیۡنَ مِنۡ قَبۡلِهِمۡ ؕ وَ لَدَارُ الۡاٰخِرَةِ خَیۡرٌ لِّلَّذِیۡنَ اتَّقَوۡا ؕ اَفَلَا تَعۡقِلُوۡنَ ﴿۱۰۹﴾[92]

Here another objection which they presented as an excuse for not accepting faith is dealt with. They objected that how is it possible that they accept some as God's messenger who was born and lived among them. If God wanted to send a messenger, He should have sent a higher creation like an angel as His messenger.

The last part of the verse refers to remnants of the nations of 'Ād, Thamūd and Madyan etc.

حَتّٰۤی اِذَا اسۡتَیۡـَٔسَ الرُّسُلُ وَ ظَنُّوۡۤا اَنَّهُمۡ قَدۡ کُذِبُوۡا جَآءَهُمۡ نَصۡرُنَا ۙ فَنُجِّیَ مَنۡ نَّشَآءُ ؕ وَ لَا یُرَدُّ بَاۡسُنَا عَنِ الۡقَوۡمِ الۡمُجۡرِمِیۡنَ ﴿۱۱۰﴾[93]

This verse describes an established practice of God to convey to the disbelievers why the punishment they are threatened with does not come to them: God does not hurry His punishment. First He sends His messengers who conclusively deliver the truth to people. The punishment arrives when these messengers lose hope in their nation's accepting faith and their nations because of a delay in punishment think that they were falsely warned of it. It is at that time that God's help arrives for His messengers.

لَقَدۡ کَانَ فِیۡ قَصَصِهِمۡ عِبۡرَةٌ لِّاُولِی الۡاَلۡبَابِ ؕ مَا کَانَ حَدِیۡثًا یُّفۡتَرٰی وَ لٰکِنۡ تَصۡدِیۡقَ الَّذِیۡ بَیۡنَ یَدَیۡهِ وَ تَفۡصِیۡلَ کُلِّ شَیۡءٍ وَّ هُدًی وَّ رَحۡمَةً لِّقَوۡمٍ یُّؤۡمِنُوۡنَ ﴿۱۱۱﴾[94]

On this self-explanatory verse ends this *sūrah*'s exegesis.

وَاٰخِرُ دَعۡوٰىهُمۡ اَنِ الۡحَمۡدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الۡعٰلَمِیۡنَ (and our last prayer is that gratitude be to God, Lord of the world).

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92. And before you also, whoever We sent as messengers were human beings from these settlements; We would send Our revelations to them. Have these people not walked about in the land so that they could have seen the fate of those who were before them. And the Hereafter is better for those who are God-conscious. Then do you not understand?

93. Until when matters reached the extent that messengers lost hope in their nations and people too thought that they were given false warnings, Our help came to them. Then they were saved whom We wanted and Our torment cannot be warded off from the wrongdoers.

94. There is a great lesson in these anecdotes for people of intellect. This Qur'ān is not something concocted; in fact, it substantiates what is before it and is a detail of everything, and is a guidance and mercy for those who believe.

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Lahore
17th June 1970 AD
21st Rabī‘ al-Thānī 1390 AH

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Tadabbur i Qur'ān

13 Sūrah al-Ra'd

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Sūrah al-Ra‘d

Theme

This *sūrah* is the counterpart of Sūrah Yūsuf, the previous *sūrah*. There is no basic difference in the theme of both *sūrahs*. It is known that a conflict between truth and evil ensued when the Qur’ān was revealed. This *sūrahs* highlights the group which was supposed to succeed ultimately in this conflict. In Sūrah Yūsuf too, they were pinpointed. However, the nature of arguments furnished is different in both *sūrahs.* In the previous *sūrah*, the point has been driven home by citing the incidents and happenings of the Prophet Joseph’s life, while in this *sūrah*, arguments are drawn from human intellect and nature for this purpose. Verses 17 to 22 highlight the theme of the *sūrah.*

Analysis of Meanings

This *sūrah* is Makkan in its entirety with regard to its contents. Some codices regard it to be Madīnan, which I fail to understand. Not one of its verse is Madīnan in my opinion, let alone the complete *sūrah*.

Following is a concise summary of its meanings.

Verse (1): This is the introductory part of the sūrah. The Prophet (sws) is addressed in it and explained that these are verses of God’s Book and are not something unfounded. Every statement in it is true and all that it is informing of is certain to happen but most people will continue to remain adamant and not profess faith.

Verses (2-4): Those signs of the universe are referred to that show that it is being run by a single wise planner. There is a vast system of providence and sustenance in it which shows that its creator has not created it for amusement; on the contrary, there is a great purpose behind it which will manifest itself one day. Signs that show that there is unity in diversity and harmony in discord are found in every part of this universe. This clearly shows that all of it is governed by a single creator and owner.

Verses (5-6): Wonder is expressed at the amazement shown by the disbelievers of the truth on being raised to life again. This amazement is tantamount to God’s denial. Their necks have been fettered in yokes. They can neither raise their eyes to observe the signs of the heavens nor lower them to see the ones found on earth. They want to hasten the punishment before repentance even though they can learn a lot from history. It is God’s mercy that in spite of the rebelliousness of people, He gives respite to them. However, He is also stern in retribution. When He seizes them, none would be able to escape His grasp.

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Verses (7-11): The disbelievers demand a sign for the punishment they were being threatened with. This demand is answered. The Prophet (sws) is assured that his only task is to warn people of this punishment. Bringing it or prescribing its time is not his responsibility. According to the established practice of God, He sends a messenger to every nation to warn them and to give them glad tidings. If the nation denies it, it is necessarily destroyed. As for the time and nature of punishment, it is known to God only. A pregnant woman knows that she is carrying a baby and will deliver it, but only God its time as well as what exactly she will deliver.

People are warned that all their deeds and thoughts are in God’s knowledge whether done secretly or openly – in the light of the day or in the dark of the night. Angels deputed by God are overseeing them. He can seize them whenever He wants and wherever He wants. His established practice is that He does not stop showing affection to a nation until it adopts the wrong attitude. When they do this, divine punishment – which none can ward off – visits it.

Verses (12-13): Certain signs of punishment are referred to. People observe them every now and then. For example lightning and thunder. God can destroy people with a single bolt of lightning whenever He wants to. He has immense power.

Verses (14-16): Invoking someone other than God is like regarding a mirage to be water and then running after it. These self-styled deities and intercessors are not going to be of benefit to anyone. There is no use calling them. Every object of this universe, through its very existence, bears witness to the oneness of God. People whose necks do not bend before God because of arrogance should see that their shadows prostrate before Him. It is futile to call those who do not even have authority to harm or benefit anyone. Polytheism nullifies God’s justice and wisdom. God is the creator of everything and He alone controls everyone.

Verse (17): Certain signs of this universe are referred to which show that God keeps intact what is beneficial and destroys that is not. This bears witness to the fact that in this conflict between good and evil that has ensued after the Qur’ān’s revelation and the Prophet’s preaching God will root out evil and make the truth prevail.

Verse (18-25): Glad tidings of success are given to those who accept the message of the Prophet (sws) and turn to tread the path of God. Those who opposed his message are cursed.

Verse (26): The following objection is responded to: if only the believers deserve all the favours of God, why have are the wealth and treasures of the world in control of those who vehemently oppose God and His messenger.

Verse (27-32): The disbelievers’ demand of being shown a miracle is cited and then answered. It is said that what gives satisfaction to the hearts is being reminded of God and His attributes and reflecting on them and not some miracle. The Prophet (sws) is assured that what he is facing was also faced by prophets and messengers before him. He should recite out to his people the Book that has been revealed to him by God and trust Him. Muslims are assured that they should not think that if a miracle is shown to

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them, they will believe in God. Even if a Qur'ān is revealed for them through which mountains start to move, the earth is smashed to pieces and the dead start talking, they will remain adamant on their stance. Believers should remember that God has not placed any compulsion in faith. Had He liked compulsion, He would have guided everyone to the straight path. The signs of punishment will continue to be revealed before them or in surrounding areas until the time of the decisive punishment. The Prophet (sws) is assured that just as these people are making fun of him, earlier messengers were also mocked at. Finally, God's punishment arrived and decided the matter of the jesters.

Verse (33-35): Polytheism and deities are refuted. These deities and intercessors do not exist. All these are concoctions. Those who are deceived by their souls in this regard will face God's wrath in this world and in the hereafter, the torment would be even worse. No deity or intercessor would be there to save them. Only they will receive the eternal favour of Paradise who fear God.

Verse (36-37): Two groups of the People of the Book are referred to. One of them adhered to the truth and hence welcomed the Qur'ān will full enthusiasm. The other opposed it because it remained entangled in religious innovations it had fabricated. The Prophet's (sws) declaration of truth before them is cited. He is warned that if after the truth being revealed to him by God he follows their innovations, none can save him from God's grasp.

Verse (38-43): In the wake of the objections and demands of his opponents, the Prophet (sws) is sounded assurance. He is told that all messengers who came before him were not angels or heavenly creatures; they were human beings like him and had wives too like him. Whatever miracles they showed, they showed at God's behest and not on their own authority. He is further told that what he is warning people of, some part of it may be shown to them in his own lifetime by God and this too can happen that he is taken away from this world by God and then these people are taken to task. If these people open their eyes and see, they will see how God is moving towards them by reducing their borders and soon they will be surrounded. At that time, they will come to know who succeeded ultimately. The Prophet (sws) is told that if these people do not regard him to be a messenger, then he should say to them that God and those who have knowledge of God's Book are sufficient witnesses between him and them.

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Section I: (Verses 1-13)

Text and Translation

بِسۡمِ اللّٰہِ الرَّحۡمٰنِ الرَّحِیۡمِ

الٓمّٓرٰ ۚ تِلۡکَ اٰیٰتُ الۡکِتٰبِ ؕ وَ الَّذِیۡۤ اُنۡزِلَ اِلَیۡکَ مِنۡ رَّبِّکَ الۡحَقُّ وَ لٰکِنَّ اَکۡثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا یُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ ﴿۱﴾ اَللّٰہُ الَّذِیۡ رَفَعَ
السَّمٰوٰتِ بِغَیۡرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوۡنَہَا ثُمَّ اسۡتَوٰی عَلَی الۡعَرۡشِ وَ سَخَّرَ الشَّمۡسَ وَ الۡقَمَرَ ؕ کُلٌّ یَّجۡرِیۡ لِاَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّی ؕ یُدَبِّرُ الۡاَمۡرَ
یُفَصِّلُ الۡاٰیٰتِ لَعَلَّکُمۡ بِلِقَآءِ رَبِّکُمۡ تُوۡقِنُوۡنَ ﴿۲﴾ وَ ہُوَ الَّذِیۡ مَدَّ الۡاَرۡضَ وَ جَعَلَ فِیۡہَا رَوَاسِیَ وَ اَنۡہٰرًا ؕ وَ مِنۡ کُلِّ
الثَّمَرٰتِ جَعَلَ فِیۡہَا زَوۡجَیۡنِ اثۡنَیۡنِ یُغۡشِی الَّیۡلَ النَّہَارَ ؕ اِنَّ فِیۡ ذٰلِکَ لَاٰیٰتٍ لِّقَوۡمٍ یَّتَفَکَّرُوۡنَ ﴿۳﴾ وَ فِی الۡاَرۡضِ قِطَعٌ
مُّتَجٰوِرٰتٌ وَّ جَنّٰتٌ مِّنۡ اَعۡنَابٍ وَّ زَرۡعٌ وَّ نَخِیۡلٌ صِنۡوَانٌ وَّ غَیۡرُ صِنۡوَانٍ یُّسۡقٰی بِمَآءٍ وَّاحِدٍ ۟ وَ نُفَضِّلُ بَعۡضَہَا عَلٰی
بَعۡضٍ فِی الۡاُکُلِ ؕ اِنَّ فِیۡ ذٰلِکَ لَاٰیٰتٍ لِّقَوۡمٍ یَّعۡقِلُوۡنَ ﴿۴﴾ وَ اِنۡ تَعۡجَبۡ فَعَجَبٌ قَوۡلُہُمۡ ءَاِذَا کُنَّا تُرٰبًا ءَاِنَّا لَفِیۡ خَلۡقٍ
جَدِیۡدٍ ؕ اُولٰٓئِکَ الَّذِیۡنَ کَفَرُوۡا بِرَبِّہِمۡ ۚ وَ اُولٰٓئِکَ الۡاَغۡلٰلُ فِیۡۤ اَعۡنَاقِہِمۡ ۚ وَ اُولٰٓئِکَ اَصۡحٰبُ النَّارِ ۚ ہُمۡ فِیۡہَا خٰلِدُوۡنَ ﴿۵﴾ وَ
یَسۡتَعۡجِلُوۡنَکَ بِالسَّیِّئَۃِ قَبۡلَ الۡحَسَنَۃِ وَ قَدۡ خَلَتۡ مِنۡ قَبۡلِہِمُ الۡمَثُلٰتُ ؕ وَ اِنَّ رَبَّکَ لَذُوۡ مَغۡفِرَۃٍ لِّلنَّاسِ عَلٰی
ظُلۡمِہِمۡ ۚ وَ اِنَّ رَبَّکَ لَشَدِیۡدُ الۡعِقَابِ ﴿۶﴾ وَ یَقُوۡلُ الَّذِیۡنَ کَفَرُوۡا لَوۡ لَاۤ اُنۡزِلَ عَلَیۡہِ اٰیَۃٌ مِّنۡ رَّبِّہٖ ؕ اِنَّمَاۤ اَنۡتَ مُنۡذِرٌ وَّ
لِکُلِّ قَوۡمٍ ہَادٍ ﴿۷﴾ اَللّٰہُ یَعۡلَمُ مَا تَحۡمِلُ کُلُّ اُنۡثٰی وَ مَا تَغِیۡضُ الۡاَرۡحَامُ وَ مَا تَزۡدَادُ ؕ وَ کُلُّ شَیۡءٍ عِنۡدَہٗ بِمِقۡدَارٍ ﴿۸﴾
عٰلِمُ الۡغَیۡبِ وَ الشَّہَادَۃِ الۡکَبِیۡرُ الۡمُتَعَالِ ﴿۹﴾ سَوَآءٌ مِّنۡکُمۡ مَّنۡ اَسَرَّ الۡقَوۡلَ وَ مَنۡ جَہَرَ بِہٖ وَ مَنۡ ہُوَ مُسۡتَخۡفٍۭ بِالَّیۡلِ وَ
سَارِبٌۢ بِالنَّہَارِ ﴿۱۰﴾ لَہٗ مُعَقِّبٰتٌ مِّنۡۢ بَیۡنِ یَدَیۡہِ وَ مِنۡ خَلۡفِہٖ یَحۡفَظُوۡنَہٗ مِنۡ اَمۡرِ اللّٰہِ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰہَ لَا یُغَیِّرُ مَا بِقَوۡمٍ حَتّٰی
یُغَیِّرُوۡا مَا بِاَنۡفُسِہِمۡ ؕ وَ اِذَاۤ اَرَادَ اللّٰہُ بِقَوۡمٍ سُوۡٓءًا فَلَا مَرَدَّ لَہٗ ۚ وَ مَا لَہُمۡ مِّنۡ دُوۡنِہٖ مِنۡ وَّالٍ ﴿۱۱﴾ ہُوَ الَّذِیۡ یُرِیۡکُمُ
الۡبَرۡقَ خَوۡفًا وَّ طَمَعًا وَّ یُنۡشِیُٔ السَّحَابَ الثِّقَالَ ﴿۱۲﴾ وَ یُسَبِّحُ الرَّعۡدُ بِحَمۡدِہٖ وَ الۡمَلٰٓئِکَۃُ مِنۡ خِیۡفَتِہٖ ۚ وَ یُرۡسِلُ
الصَّوَاعِقَ فَیُصِیۡبُ بِہَا مَنۡ یَّشَآءُ وَ ہُمۡ یُجَادِلُوۡنَ فِی اللّٰہِ ۚ وَ ہُوَ شَدِیۡدُ الۡمِحَالِ ﴿۱۳﴾

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Ever-Merciful.

This is Alif Lām Rā. These are the revelations of the Book of God and what has been revealed to you by your Lord is the truth but most people are not believing. (1)

It is God alone Who has raised up high the skies without any pillars that you can see.

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Then He sat on His throne and brought the sun and the moon into subservience. Each of them is moving until an appointed time. It is He Who governs the system of the universe and explains His signs so that you are convinced of meeting with your Lord. (2)

And it is He Who has spread the earth and made mountains and seas in it and produced in it pairs of every type of fruit. He covers the night over the day. Indeed, in all these things, there are signs for those who reflect. (3)

And in the land, there are portions adjoining one another, orchards of grapes, crops and palm-trees. Both paired and single. All of them are nourished by the same water but in their fruits We make one superior to the other. Indeed, there are signs in this for those who use their intellect. (4)

Now if you express wonder, then what is worthy of wonder is their statement: “When we become clay, will we be raised to life again?” It is these people who rejected their Lord. It is they who have yokes in their necks and it is they who are the companions of Hell. They shall abide in it forever. (5)

And these people are asking from you to hasten evil before good even though cases of exemplary punishment have passed before them. Your Lord is forgiving to people in spite of their excesses and is also stern in retribution. (6)

And those guilty of disbelief say: “Why was not a sign revealed to him by his Lord?” You are only a warner and for each nation there is a guide. Only God knows the foetus in every female and whatever increases or decreases in the wombs and everything is in a measure with Him. He knows the unknown and the manifest; He is the supreme; the majestic. Equal are in His knowledge those of you who converse secretly and those who converse aloud and those who are hidden in the darkness of the night and those who move in the light of the day. The custodians of God’s directives are in front of them and behind them who guard them by taking turns. God does not change His dealing with a nation unless it itself does not change its attitude. And when God intends to bring a calamity upon a nation, no one can avert it nor can anyone be their helper against God. (7-11)

He it is Who makes the lightning flash upon you which creates both fear and hope and brings forth clouds laden [with water]. And the thunder extols Him together with glorifying Him and angels too extol and glorify Him because of His fear. And He sends thunderbolts and impels them down on whomsoever He wishes when they are disputing about God. And He has great power. (12-13)

Explanation

الٓمّٓرٰ ۚ تِلۡكَ اٰيٰتُ الۡكِتٰبِ ؕ وَالَّذِىۡۤ اُنۡزِلَ اِلَيۡكَ مِنۡ رَّبِّكَ الۡحَـقُّ وَلٰـكِنَّ اَكۡثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ ﴿۱﴾[1]

The isolated letters (*ḥurūf muqaṭṭa‘āt*) have been comprehensively discussed in the

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beginning of Sūrah al-Baqarah’s exegesis. In my opinion, they are names of a *sūrah.* Here the inchoative (*mubtadā’*) is suppressed. The sentence is thus: هٰذِهِ الٓرٰ (this is alif lām rā).

The word الْكِتٰبِ has been discussed in detail in Sūrah al-Baqarah’s exegesis. It refers to the Book whose advent God promised through His prophets and messengers. The antecedent of the pronoun تِلْكَ is الٓرٰ. The implication is that this sūrah consists of verses of the promised Book. This sentence expresses both favour and threat at the same time. The favour referred to is that God has revealed the great gift which He had promised to reveal through his prophets and messengers. It is now the obligation of the people to believe in it with sincerity and benefit from its blessings. The threat they allude to is that since these verses are of God’s Book, hence those who make fun of them instead of giving them due importance and expend their energies in opposing it should think for themselves about the wretched fate they are inviting.

The words “and what has been revealed to you by your Lord is the truth” sound an assurance to the Prophet (sws): every claim made by the Qur’ān is well-argued, soundly reasoned and absolutely true. What it states is bound to happen. It has nothing that can be differed from. It is the misfortune of the people themselves that they are not accepting it.

اَللّٰهُ الَّذِیْ رَفَعَ السَّمٰوٰتِ بِغَیْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰی عَلَی الْعَرْشِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ؕ كُلٌّ یَّجْرِیْ لِاَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّی ؕ یُدَبِّرُ الْاَمْرَ یُفَصِّلُ الْاٰیٰتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ بِلِقَآءِ رَبِّكُمْ تُوْقِنُوْنَ ﴿۲﴾[2]

The word عَمَدٍ is the plural of both عمود and عماد. تَرَوْنَهَا is its attribute. The verse directs out attention to the profound power and wisdom of God. It has erected this canopy on such columns of gravity that eyes cannot see them.

The sentence “Then He sat on His throne” implies that He did not become aloof after creating this universe, as the idolaters contended. He is governing it.

The two great signs of the sun and the moon bear witness by their very existence that everything is in God’s control. Nothing can dare depart its ordained course. The sun and the moon rise and set at specific times without a second’s delay.

The last part of the verse “it is He Who governs the system of the universe and explains His signs so that you are convinced of meeting with your Lord” means that not only do the signs testify that only God governs the entire universe, He is also explaining the implications of these signs so that people are convinced that have a prescribed time of life. After that they have to return to meet God.

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2. It is God alone Who has raised up high the skies without any pillars that you can see. Then He sat on His throne and brought the sun and the moon into subservience. Each of them is moving until an appointed time. It is He Who governs the system of the universe and explains His signs so that you are convinced of meeting with your Lord.

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وَهُوَ الَّذِیْ مَدَّ الْاَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِیْهَا رَوَاسِیَ وَاَنْهٰرًا ؕ وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرٰتِ جَعَلَ فِیْهَا زَوْجَیْنِ اثْنَیْنِ یُغْشِی الَّیْلَ النَّهَارَ ؕ اِنَّ فِیْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰیٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ یَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ۝۳[3]

After the signs of the sky, this verse directs attention to the signs of the earth. Just as the signs of the sky bear witness to God's governance, power, wisdom and oneness, in a similar way, every part of this earth bears evidence to these attributes only if people can reflect and deliberate. The seas and the mountains are so different from one another with regard to their nature but God, through His power and wisdom, has created such harmony between them that springs have sprouted from mountains. Is this a proof of the fact that they have been created out of their own accord and have different deities governing them or the proof that one single powerful and mighty being endowed with wisdom has made these opposing elements and then created tremendous harmony between them through His unfathomable wisdom so that they complement one another?

The opposing elements of this universe like the sky and the earth, the sun and the moon, the night and the day have such harmony between one another that it clearly bears witness that one single being is ruling it and it is not being governed by different gods at war with one another. The words "and produced in it pairs of every type of fruit" refer to the all-embracing and comprehensive nature of this law: every single fruit and seed also occurs in pairs, whether human beings know it or not. Even the seed of wheat is divided into two parts; however, both are in complete harmony with one another. This paired-phenomenon of the universe bears witness that this world also has pair which is the hereafter. Together with its counterpart it fulfils its objective otherwise it is a purposeless existence.

There are several signs of God's creativity, governance, power, wisdom, oneness, and the day of judgement in these things but only those people are able to see these signs who use their intellect and reflect on them. Careless and indifferent people are not able to benefit from them.

وَفِی الْاَرْضِ قِطَعٌ مُّتَجٰوِرٰتٌ وَّجَنّٰتٌ مِّنْ اَعْنَابٍ وَّزَرْعٌ وَّنَخِیْلٌ صِنْوَانٌ وَّغَیْرُ صِنْوَانٍ یُّسْقٰی بِمَآءٍ وَّاحِدٍ ۫ وَنُفَضِّلُ بَعْضَهَا عَلٰی بَعْضٍ فِی الْاُكُلِ ؕ اِنَّ فِیْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰیٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ یَّعْقِلُوْنَ ۝۴[4]

This verse directs the attention of the addressees to another aspect of the signs of the

3. And it is He Who has spread the earth and made mountains and seas in it and produced in it pairs of every type of fruit. He covers the night over the day. Indeed, in all these things, there are signs for those who reflect.

4. And in the land, there are portions adjoining one another, orchards of grapes, crops and palm-trees. Both paired and single. All of them are nourished by the same water but in their fruits We make one superior to the other. Indeed, there are signs in this for those who use their intellect.

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earth: crops are watered with the same water but the extent of produce is different; some cultivated lands have more and some have less. Similarly, the taste also varies; some are tasty and others are not; the development of trees also varies. At times, a single root produces many stems and sometimes just one. Does all this show that everything is happening of its own accord and a blind law of nature is governing everything or the fact that a single knowledgeable and wise God is governing this universe under His own supervision? He is the sole sovereign Whose will and intention rule it.

وَاِنۡ تَعۡجَبۡ فَعَجَبٌ قَوۡلُهُمۡ ءَاِذَا كُنَّا تُرٰبًا ءَاِنَّا لَفِىۡ خَلۡقٍ جَدِيۡدٍ ؕ اُولٰٓـئِكَ الَّذِيۡنَ كَفَرُوۡا بِرَبِّهِمۡ ۚ وَاُولٰٓـئِكَ الۡاَغۡلٰلُ فِىۡۤ اَعۡنَاقِهِمۡ ۚ وَاُولٰٓـئِكَ اَصۡحٰبُ النَّارِ ۚ هُمۡ فِيۡهَا خٰلِدُوۡنَ ۝5

The last part of the verse shows that belief in God does not mean that a person just believes in His existence; it is essential to believe in His attributes and rights as well. If a person does not do so, He is a disbeliever in spite of acknowledging God’s existence. God does not accept this belief. He does not need anyone to believe in Him; it is the contrary in fact.

These people have yokes of arrogance, egotism, blind following and stagnation around their necks. These yokes neither allow their necks to be raised up so that they can reflect on the signs of the heavens referred to by the Qur’ān in verse 2 nor let them bend down so that they can observe the signs of the earth referred to by the Qur’ān in verses 3-4. The consequence of this blindness is that they will land in Hell and rot it in forever. Verse 8 of Sūrah Yāsīn refers to this in the following words: اِنَّا جَعَلۡنَا فِىۡۤ اَعۡنَاقِهِمۡ اَغۡلٰلًا فَهِىَ اِلَى الۡاَذۡقَانِ فَهُمۡ مُّقۡمَحُوۡنَ.[6]

وَيَسۡتَعۡجِلُوۡنَكَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ قَبۡلَ الۡحَسَنَةِ وَقَدۡ خَلَتۡ مِنۡ قَبۡلِهِمُ الۡمَثُلٰتُ ؕ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُوۡ مَغۡفِرَةٍ لِّلنَّاسِ عَلٰى ظُلۡمِهِمۡ ۚ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَشَدِيۡدُ الۡعِقَابِ ۝6[7]

The word مَثُلٰت is the plural of مثلة. It means “chastisement and exemplary punishment.” The verse implies that these people await some punishment and calamity before

5. Now if you express wonder, then what is worthy of wonder is their statement: “When we become clay, will we be raised to life again?” It is these people who rejected their Lord. It is they who have yokes in their necks and it is they who are the companions of Hell. They shall abide in it forever.

6. We have put yokes around their necks that reach up to their chins so that they cannot bow their heads.

7. And these people are asking from you to hasten evil before good even though cases of exemplary punishment have passed before them. Your Lord is forgiving to people in spite of their excesses and is also stern in retribution.

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repentance. They say that they will only accept the message of the Prophet (sws) if they see the threatened doom. The fact is that people who have sound intellect learn from others and through their own experience. They should learn this lesson from the several nations of the past who met their fate. Their anecdotes are being narrated to them but these people are not paying heed to them. It is purely God's grace that in spite of their disbelief and polytheism, He is giving them a long respite so that they mend their ways. However, every period has a limit. Once this period expires, God seizes people in a very stern way.

وَيَقُوْلُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَوْلَآ اُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ اٰيَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ ؕ اِنَّمَآ اَنْتَ مُنْذِرٌ وَّلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ ﴿۷﴾[8]

The word اٰيَةٌ refers to a sign of punishment. This is a reference to the punishment these people were demanding to hasten in the previous verse. It is said that only God has the authority to show a sign and not the prophet. He must do his work and let God do His work. He should ignore their nonsensical talk.

The last part of the verse refers to an established practice of God: before He punishes a nation, He warns and admonishes them. Thus in the case of the Quraysh, He has sent the Prophet (sws) as a guide. This clearly shows that if they do not accept his message, then they will be punished.

اَللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَحْمِلُ كُلُّ اُنْثٰى وَمَا تَغِيْضُ الْاَرْحَامُ وَمَا تَزْدَادُ ؕ وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ عِنْدَهٗ بِمِقْدَارٍ ﴿۸﴾[9]

If an event is certain to happen but its time of arrival cannot be foretold or cannot be shown on demand, this cannot negate it. Denying it would be foolishness. The verse cites the example of pregnancy to prove this claim. The wrong doers are pregnant with misdeeds and one day this burden will be delivered. However, the time of this delivery is only known to God. Even if people show haste, they cannot change the established practice of God in this regard.

عٰلِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْكَبِيْرُ الْمُتَعَالِ ﴿۹﴾[10]

This verse further explains the topic under discussion. It implies that people should not measure the knowledge of God by their own limited knowledge. His knowledge embraces the known and the unknown. Only He knows His own intentions and schemes and others know about them to the extent He wants to reveal to them. He is great and mighty.

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8. And those guilty of disbelief say: "Why was not a sign revealed to him by his Lord?" You are only a warner and for each nation there is a guide.

9. Only God knows the foetus in every female and whatever increases or decreases in the wombs and everything is in a measure with Him.

10. He knows the unknown and the manifest; He is the supreme; the majestic.

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سَوَآءٌ مِّنْكُمْ مَّنْ اَسَرَّ الْقَوْلَ وَمَنْ جَهَرَ بِهٖ وَمَنْ هُوَ مُسْتَخْفٍۢ بِالَّيْلِ وَسَارِبٌۢ بِالنَّهَارِ ﴿١٠﴾[11]

The verse implies that only such a person can fear seizing his enemy who thinks that any delay may let him off the hook. However, God's knowledge of things and human beings is all-embracing and comprehensive such that He knows what they conceal and reveal and every move they make in the day and night. Why should then He be hasty in nabbing them? He can seize them whenever and wherever He wants to. None can dare escape or hide from His grasp.

لَهٗ مُعَقِّبٰتٌ مِّنْۢ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهٖ يَحْفَظُوْنَهٗ مِنْ اَمْرِ اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتّٰى يُغَيِّرُوْا مَا بِاَنْفُسِهِمْ ؕ وَاِذَآ اَرَادَ اللّٰهُ بِقَوْمٍ سُوْٓءًا فَلَا مَرَدَّ لَهٗ ۚ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِهٖ مِنْ وَّالٍ ﴿١١﴾[12]

The noun qualified by the adjective مُعَقِّبٰتٌ is suppressed. Ie., أَرْوَاحٌ مُعَقِّبٰتٌ. This refers to the angels who take turns in watching over every human being on God's behalf. The words مِنْ اَمْرِ اللّٰهِ are meant for explanation, the way they occur in قُلِ الرُّوْحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي in verse 85 of Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl and some other verses. They imply that angels are from the directive of God.

This verse is actually further explanation of the previous verse.

It also elucidates the real practice of God regarding punishing people. God's dealing changes with a nation only after it itself changes its attitude and even after warnings does not pay heed. Once this happens, He sends His punishment which none can ward off. The implication is that instead of demanding signs of punishment, these people should review their attitude in the light of God's established practice.

هُوَ الَّذِيْ يُرِيْكُمُ الْبَرْقَ خَوْفًا وَّطَمَعًا وَّيُنْشِئُ السَّحَابَ الثِّقَالَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَيُسَبِّحُ الرَّعْدُ بِحَمْدِهٖ وَالْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ مِنْ خِيْفَتِهٖ ۚ وَيُرْسِلُ الصَّوَاعِقَ فَيُصِيْبُ بِهَا مَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَهُمْ يُجَادِلُوْنَ فِي اللّٰهِ ۚ وَهُوَ شَدِيْدُ الْمِحَالِ ﴿١٣﴾[13]

This verse directs the attention of the addressees to some signs in the world in

11. Equal are in His knowledge those of you who converse secretly and those who converse aloud and those who are hidden in the darkness of the night and those who move in the light of the day.

12. The custodians of God's directives are in front of them and behind them who guard them by taking turns. God does not change His dealing with a nation unless it itself does not change its attitude. And when God intends to bring a calamity upon a nation, no one can avert it nor can anyone be their helper against God.

13. He it is Who makes the lightning flash upon you which creates both fear and hope and brings forth clouds laden [with water]. And the thunder extols Him together with glorifying Him and angels too extol and glorify Him because of His fear. And He sends thunderbolts and impels them down on whomsoever He wishes when they are disputing about God. And He has great power.

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response to their demand to be shown signs of punishment.

In يُسَبِّحُ الرَّعْدُ بِحَمْدِهٖ وَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ مِنْ خِيْفَتِهٖ parallel words have been suppressed which is a common feature of Qur'ānic Arabic. Thus the actual structure is like this يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهٖ الرَّعْدُ مِنْ خِيْفَتِهٖ بِحَمْدِهٖ وَالْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ مِنْ خِيْفَتِهٖ:

In تسبیح God is absolved of negative attributes and in حمد His noble attributes are acknowledged.

This verse further elucidates the topic under discussion: while the disbelievers have the audacity to demand divine punishment, the angels are continuously glorifying and praising God fearing they could be given any directive at any time. God will His lash of punishment to whomsoever He wants while people are still disputing about Him.

Section II: Verses (14-16)

In the next few verses, it is explained that those who are demanding God's punishment while relying on their self-proclaimed deities are only calling for their own doom. There are no associates of God. He is the one and only. So whenever a person calls on some deity He is actually calling on God.

Readers may now proceed to study the verses.

Text and Translation

لَهٗ دَعْوَةُ الْحَقِّ ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ لَا يَسْتَجِيْبُوْنَ لَهُمْ بِشَيْءٍ اِلَّا كَبَاسِطِ كَفَّيْهِ اِلَى الْمَآءِ لِيَبْلُغَ فَاهُ وَمَا هُوَ بِبَالِغِهٖ ؕ وَمَا دُعَآءُ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ اِلَّا فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ ﴿۱۴﴾ وَلِلّٰهِ يَسْجُدُ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ طَوْعًا وَّكَرْهًا وَّ ظِلٰلُهُمْ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْاٰصَالِ ﴿۱۵﴾ قُلْ مَنْ رَّبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ قُلِ اللّٰهُ ؕ قُلْ اَفَاتَّخَذْتُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اَوْلِيَآءَ لَا يَمْلِكُوْنَ لِاَنْفُسِهِمْ نَفْعًا وَّلَا ضَرًّا ؕ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْاَعْمٰى وَالْبَصِيْرُ ۙ اَمْ هَلْ تَسْتَوِي الظُّلُمٰتُ وَالنُّوْرُ ۚ اَمْ جَعَلُوْا لِلّٰهِ شُرَكَآءَ خَلَقُوْا كَخَلْقِهٖ فَتَشَابَهَ الْخَلْقُ عَلَيْهِمْ ؕ قُلِ اللّٰهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّهُوَ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ ﴿۱۶﴾

Real calling is calling Him. As for those whom they call besides Him, they cannot answer them in any way. Calling them is like someone extending both his hands towards water that it may reach his mouth even though it reaching his mouth is not possible in any way. The call of these disbelievers is only a call in vain. (14)

And whoever are in the heavens and the earth all are prostrating before God, whether willingly or unwillingly and also their shadows morning and evening. Ask them: Who is the master of the heavens and the earth? Say: God. Ask them: Have you still made other guardians besides Him who cannot even benefit or harm their own selves? Ask them: Can those without sight and those with sight become equal? Or can darkness and light become the same? Have they associated such partners with God

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who have created the way God has created so that the matter of creation has become ambiguous to them? Tell them: The creator of everything is God alone and He is one only, dominant upon all. (15-16)

Explanation

لَهٗ دَعْوَةُ الْحَقِّ ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ لَا يَسْتَجِيْبُوْنَ لَهُمْ بِشَيْءٍ اِلَّا كَبَاسِطِ كَفَّيْهِ اِلَى الْمَآءِ لِيَبْلُغَ فَاهُ وَمَا هُوَ بِبَالِغِهٖ ؕ وَمَا دُعَآءُ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ اِلَّا فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ ﴿۱۴﴾[14]

What is implied is that only calling God is beneficial, consequential and blessed. This is because all authority and control are with Him. All those who call others will never be answered by them. These deities or partners of God hear nothing because they do not even exist. The verse then cites the example of a mirage to portray this situation.

وَلِلّٰهِ يَسْجُدُ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ طَوْعًا وَّكَرْهًا وَّظِلٰلُهُمْ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْاٰصَالِ ﴿۱۵﴾[15]

The topic brought up in the previous verse is emphasized here through the testimony of natural phenomena. The implication is that everything by its actual existence obeys God. If they who have been given some freedom of choice misuse this freedom, they should realize that their physical existence and system still obey the law of God. If they show arrogance, then this is tantamount to rebellion against their nature.

The example of one's shadow is given in the verse. Here too, in order to direct attention of the mind to the fact that everything is subservient to the law of God, it is stated that even the shadows of things prostrate at night and slowly lift their heads at dawn and then once again after the suns descends at midday, they prostrate before the Almighty.

This is a special form of reasoning called insinuation. In it, attention of the mind is directed to the reality of a symbol. This form of reason is dfferent from logical reasoning and is actually based on human nature.

قُلْ مَنْ رَّبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ قُلِ اللّٰهُ ؕ قُلْ اَفَاتَّخَذْتُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِهٖۤ اَوْلِيَآءَ لَا يَمْلِكُوْنَ لِاَنْفُسِهِمْ نَفْعًا وَّلَا ضَرًّا ؕ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْاَعْمٰى وَالْبَصِيْرُ ۙ اَمْ هَلْ تَسْتَوِي الظُّلُمٰتُ وَالنُّوْرُ ۚ اَمْ جَعَلُوْا لِلّٰهِ شُرَكَآءَ خَلَقُوْا كَخَلْقِهٖ فَتَشَابَهَ الْخَلْقُ عَلَيْهِمْ ؕ قُلِ اللّٰهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّهُوَ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ ﴿۱۶﴾[16]

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14. Real calling is calling Him. As for those whom they call besides Him, they cannot answer them in any way. Calling them is like someone extending both his hands towards water that it may reach his mouth even though it reaching his mouth is not possible in any way. The call of these disbelievers is only a call in vain.

15. And whoever are in the heavens and the earth all are prostrating before God, whether willingly or unwillingly and also their shadows morning and evening.

16. Ask them: Who is the master of the heavens and the earth? Say: God. Ask them: Have you

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The word قُلْ also implies "to ask and to raise a question." Context decides its usage.

The verse states that when they acknowledge that God is the master of the heavens and the earth, then on what logic have they set up other guardians and deities?

Vision and blindness referred to in the verse relates to intellectual and moral vision and blindness. Similarly, darkness refers to moral darkness and light refers to the radiance of intellect and faith. The Arabic word for darkness (الظُّلُمٰتُ) is mentioned in the plural, while the word for light (النُّوْرُ) is mentioned in the singular. This is a subtle usage: moral and intellectual disorders can and do manifest themselves through various ways but the door to intellectual and moral radiance is just one.

This verse actually refutes polytheism from its origin. People think that their associates and deities will save them from God' grasp regardless of the nature of their beliefs and deeds; this, in other words, would mean that in the sight of God, darkness and light, the blind and those with eyesight are equal. In this way, they have actually razed down the foundations of truth and justice on which the heavens and the earth stand. Once this is done, this world becomes a purposeless place which has no use except entertainment.

The verse also asks them the grounds of setting up partners with God: have they too created anything like God creates so that the matter has become ambiguous to them and they are not able to distinguish who is created what.

The last part of the verse admonishes them that when they regard God to be the creator of everything, then on what basis have they made associates of God. The word الْقَهَّارُ means someone who has control and authority over everyone. In other words, when He is also the creator and has authority over all, then what is the need in the first place to set up these partners?

Section III: Verses (17-26)

In this section, it is further explained that polytheism uproots the whole system of truth and justice on which this world stands and whose testimony laws of this universe give. Moreover, a very subtle allusion is given to the victory of the truth over evil in this conflict created between them due to the Qur'ān's revelation. Evil will be blown away like froth.

Readers may proceed to study the verses in the light of this background.

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still made other guardians besides Him who cannot even benefit or harm their own selves? Ask them: Can those without sight and those with sight become equal? Or can darkness and light become the same? Have they associated such partners with God who have created the way God has created so that the matter of creation has become ambiguous to them? Tell them: The creator of everything is God alone and He is one only, dominant upon all.

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Text and Translation

أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَسَالَتْ اَوْدِيَةٌۢ بِقَدَرِهَا فَاحْتَمَلَ السَّيْلُ زَبَدًا رَّابِيًا ؕ وَ مِمَّا يُوْقِدُوْنَ عَلَيْهِ فِي
النَّارِ ابْتِغَآءَ حِلْيَةٍ اَوْ مَتَاعٍ زَبَدٌ مِّثْلُهٗ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللّٰهُ الْحَقَّ وَ الْبَاطِلَ ؕ فَاَمَّا الزَّبَدُ فَيَذْهَبُ جُفَآءً ۚ وَ
اَمَّا مَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ فَيَمْكُثُ فِي الْاَرْضِ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللّٰهُ الْاَمْثَالَ ﴿۱۷﴾ لِلَّذِيْنَ اسْتَجَابُوْا لِرَبِّهِمُ الْحُسْنٰى ؕ
وَ الَّذِيْنَ لَمْ يَسْتَجِيْبُوْا لَهٗ لَوْ اَنَّ لَهُمْ مَّا فِي الْاَرْضِ جَمِيْعًا وَّ مِثْلَهٗ مَعَهٗ لَافْتَدَوْا بِهٖ ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ سُوْٓءُ
الْحِسَابِ ۙ وَ مَاْوٰىهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ ؕ وَ بِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ ﴿۱۸﴾ اَفَمَنْ يَّعْلَمُ اَنَّمَآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ الْحَقُّ كَمَنْ هُوَ اَعْمٰى ؕ
اِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ اُولُوا الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿۱۹﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يُوْفُوْنَ بِعَهْدِ اللّٰهِ وَ لَا يَنْقُضُوْنَ الْمِيْثَاقَ ﴿۲۰﴾ وَ الَّذِيْنَ يَصِلُوْنَ مَآ
اَمَرَ اللّٰهُ بِهٖۤ اَنْ يُّوْصَلَ وَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ وَ يَخَافُوْنَ سُوْٓءَ الْحِسَابِ ﴿۲۱﴾ وَ الَّذِيْنَ صَبَرُوا ابْتِغَآءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِمْ وَ
اَقَامُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَ اَنْفَقُوْا مِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ سِرًّا وَّ عَلَانِيَةً وَّ يَدْرَءُوْنَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ ﴿۲۲﴾
جَنّٰتُ عَدْنٍ يَّدْخُلُوْنَهَا وَ مَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ اٰبَآئِهِمْ وَ اَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَ ذُرِّيّٰتِهِمْ وَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ يَدْخُلُوْنَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ
بَابٍ ﴿۲۳﴾ سَلٰمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا صَبَرْتُمْ فَنِعْمَ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ ﴿۲۴﴾ وَ الَّذِيْنَ يَنْقُضُوْنَ عَهْدَ اللّٰهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مِيْثَاقِهٖ وَ
يَقْطَعُوْنَ مَآ اَمَرَ اللّٰهُ بِهٖۤ اَنْ يُّوْصَلَ وَ يُفْسِدُوْنَ فِي الْاَرْضِ ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَ لَهُمْ سُوْٓءُ الدَّارِ ﴿۲۵﴾ اَللّٰهُ
يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَ يَقْدِرُ ؕ وَ فَرِحُوْا بِالْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ؕ وَ مَا الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ اِلَّا مَتَاعٌ ﴿۲۶﴾

He sent down water from the sky; so, the valleys poured forth according to their capacity. Then the flood carried the rising froth and such froth also rises from within things which they melt in fire to make jewellery or other similar things. In precisely this way, God strikes truth and falsehood. So, the froth is wasted away but what is beneficial to people stays in the land. God in this manner relates parables. Those who responded to the call of their Lord, for them is a good fate, and those who did not accept His call, even if they have whatever is in the earth and with it its equivalent too, they all will give it in ransom for their release. It is these people who shall have a harsh accountability and whose abode shall be Hell and what an evil abode it is. (17-18)

So, will the person who knows that whatever has been revealed to you from your Lord is the truth become like the one who is blind? Only they receive a reminder who use their intellect – who keep the promise made with God and do not break the promise. And who keep intact what God has asked to keep intact and fear their Lord and dread a harsh accountability. And those who remained steadfast to please their Lord, were diligent in the prayer and openly and secretly spent from what We had given them and those who repel vice with virtue, they will ultimately succeed: gardens

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of eternity in which they will enter and those also who will become worthy of it from among their forefathers and their wives and their children. And angels will come to them from every door and say: “Peace be to you because you remained steadfast. So, how nice is the successful end!” (19-24)

And cursed are those who break God’s promise after making it and sever what God has directed to keep intact and spread disorder in the land and for them is also an evil fate in the next world. God gives abundantly to whomsoever He wants and gives sparingly to whomsoever He wants and they are engrossed in the life of this world even though this life of the world is only a trivial provision with regard to the life of the next world. (25-26)

Explanation

أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَسَالَتْ اَوْدِيَةٌۢ بِقَدَرِهَا فَاحْتَمَلَ السَّيْلُ زَبَدًا رَّابِيًا ؕ وَمِمَّا يُوْقِدُوْنَ عَلَيْهِ فِي النَّارِ ابْتِغَآءَ حِلْيَةٍ اَوْ مَتَاعٍ زَبَدٌ مِّثْلُهٗ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللّٰهُ الْحَقَّ وَالْبَاطِلَ ؕ فَاَمَّا الزَّبَدُ فَيَذْهَبُ جُفَآءً ۚ وَاَمَّا مَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ فَيَمْكُثُ فِي الْاَرْضِ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللّٰهُ الْاَمْثَالَ ﴿۱۷﴾[17]

Earlier in verse 16, it was stated that the most heinous aspect of polytheism and unfounded intercession is that they equate the blind with those who have sight and light with darkness or in other words truth with falsehood. This is obviously against reason and justice. Here, in this verse, one step ahead is taken and it is stated that these things are against the nature of this universe as well and also the established practice of God which is in play in it.

The nature of this universe is explained by a parable which ends by saying that froth is dissipated and water which is beneficial for the earth and its inhabitants remains in the earth.

This reality is then explained through another parable: after melting silver or any other metal in a pot, the filth comes to the surface and evaporates and the silver remains.

Through both these parables, the temperament of the universe made by God becomes evident. It wants to keep intact what is beneficial and destroy what is not. It is on this pattern that God has based His established practice: He makes truth and falsehood strike one another. As a result of this collision, the froth of falsehood that appears is made to evaporate; however, what is beneficial, remains. The implication is that the rain which is pouring down now in the form of divine revelation has also

17. He sent down water from the sky; so, the valleys poured forth according to their capacity. Then the flood carried the rising froth and such froth also rises from within things which they melt in fire to make jewellery or other similar things. In precisely this way, God strikes truth and falsehood. So, the froth is wasted away but what is beneficial to people stays in the land. God in this manner relates parables.

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raised some froth. However, people will see that very soon all this froth will vanish and whatever remains is the Qur’ān and its recipients.

Some words after “God in this manner relates parables” are suppressed. The overall sentence would be: “God in this manner relates parables so that people who are fervently supporting falsehood see their fate in them and the believers too see their shinning fate.”

لِلَّذِيْنَ اسْتَجَابُوْا لِرَبِّهِمُ الْحُسْنٰى ۭ وَالَّذِيْنَ لَمْ يَسْتَجِيْبُوْا لَهٗ لَوْ اَنَّ لَهُمْ مَّا فِي الْاَرْضِ جَمِيْعًا وَّمِثْلَهٗ مَعَهٗ لَافْتَدَوْا بِهٖ ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ لَهُمْ سُوْۗءُ الْحِسَابِ ۙ وَمَاْوٰىهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ ۭ وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ ﴿۱۸﴾[18]

The noun qualified by the word الْحُسْنٰى has been suppressed here because of concomitant indications. Ie, العَاقِبَةُ الْحُسْنٰى (good fate). What is said in the form of a parable earlier is stated here in simple words.

The expression “harsh accountability” refers to the fact that the slightest of their blemishes will be punished and every utterance and deed of theirs will come before them in its original horrific form. As for the believers, their blemishes and mistakes will be ignored but as for these arrogant individuals, even their most minute deeds will appear as mountains.

The verse points out the real reason of their evasion: it is the love of the material world that is stopping them to accept the message of the Qur’ān. But the very material assets they are so infatuated with today will not be ale to save them in the slightest way in the Hereafter even if they are give in ransom.

اَفَمَنْ يَّعْلَمُ اَنَّمَآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ الْحَقُّ كَمَنْ هُوَ اَعْمٰى ۭ اِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ اُولُوا الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿۱۹﴾[19]

The word “blind” here refers to blindness of the heart and intellect. In verse 16 too, it has been used thus.

The verse assures the Prophet (sws) and at the same time warns and admonishes the disbelievers too. As for the assurance aspect, the Prophet (sws) is told that not everyone will respond in the same way to his call; only those with intellect will receive a reminder from him. As for those who hearts are dead and whose intellect have become blind, they will not benefit from it. In other words, he should not be worried and dejected without any cause.

The style of this verse shows that people are of two types: there are some for whom

18. Those who responded to the call of their Lord, for them is a good fate, and those who did not accept His call, even if they have whatever is in the earth and with it its equivalent too, they all will give it in ransom for their release. It is these people who shall have a harsh accountability and whose abode shall be Hell and what an evil abode it is.

19. So, will the person who knows that whatever has been revealed to you from your Lord is the truth become like the one who is blind? Only they receive a reminder who use their intellect.

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the call of the Prophet (sws) and the Qur’ān is the call of their own heart; for them, the Qur’ān is a reminder for it does not force anything on them from outside; it only stirs the treasures found in their nature and brings them before their eyes. The other type is the category opposite to it. Such disbelievers are told that how is it possible that such blind people be equal to those whose hearts and minds are radiant: it is essential that the fate of both be different in accordance with their deeds.

الَّذِيْنَ يُوْفُوْنَ بِعَهْدِ اللّٰهِ وَلَا يَنْقُضُوْنَ الْمِيْثَاقَ ﴿۲۰﴾[20]

The “promise” refers to the covenant made by every descendent of Adam (sws) when his soul was called in God’s presence before birth. Everyone solemnly agreed to abide by it. This has been mentioned in detail in verse 172 of Sūrah al-A‘rāf.

The implication of the verse is that they who have this covenant in mind and have not broken it are the ones who will receive reminder from the Qur’ān. As for those who have perverted their natures and have broken this covenant, the Prophet (sws) should not expect any good from them.[21]

وَالَّذِيْنَ يَصِلُوْنَ مَآ اَمَرَ اللّٰهُ بِهٖٓ اَنْ يُّوْصَلَ وَيَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ وَيَخَافُوْنَ سُوْٓءَ الْحِسَابِ ﴿۲۱﴾[22]

This refers to blood relations. In other words, just as they give due respect from the bottom of their hearts to the rights of God, they also generously fulfil the obligations imposed on them with regard to their blood relations. They do not sever them; they maintain them. And they do all this not to show off but for fear of God and to please Him. In verses 8-10 of Sūrah al-Dahr, it is thus stated: وَيُطْعِمُوْنَ الطَّعَامَ عَلٰى حُبِّهٖ مِسْكِيْنًا وَّيَتِيْمًا وَّاَسِيْرًا ۝ اِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللّٰهِ لَا نُرِيْدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَآءً وَّلَا شُكُوْرًا ۝ اِنَّا نَخَافُ مِنْ رَّبِّنَا يَوْمًا عَبُوْسًا قَمْطَرِيْرًا.[23]

وَالَّذِيْنَ صَبَرُوا ابْتِغَآءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِمْ وَاَقَامُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاَنْفَقُوْا مِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ سِرًّا وَّعَلَانِيَةً وَّيَدْرَءُوْنَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ ﴿۲۲﴾[24]

It may be noted that there is a world of difference between praying and being

20. Who keep the promise made with God and do not break the promise.

21. For a detailed discussion regarding this covenant, readers can consult my book: *Ḥaqīqat-i shirk wa tawḥīd* (The Essence of Polytheism and Monotheism).

22. And who keep intact what God has asked to keep intact and fear their Lord and dread a harsh accountability.

23. And they used to give food to the poor, the orphan and the captive in spite of being in need of it; [their motivation being:] “We are feeding you for God only.” No reward do we desire from you nor gratitude. We dread from our Lord a Day, harsh and cruel.

24. And those who remained steadfast to please their Lord, were diligent in the prayer and openly and secretly spent from what We had given them and those who repel vice with virtue, they will ultimately succeed.

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diligent in praying.

The formal spending for the cause of God is called *zakāh* but it does not mean that once this obligation is discharged spending more in charity is not required. *Zakāh* comes under spending openly. Secret spending on which depends real spiritual elevation is still needed. It is this type of spending that has real significance with regard to self-purification (*tazkiyah*).

The last part of the verse says that they do good in all circumstances and not evil in return for evil. Though this is a general principle, it also has a specific connotation here: Thus they even spend on those who do not treat them properly. It is apparent from both the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth that such an act of virtue has great significance in the balance of God

The word الدَّار refers to the hereafter. In other words, real success in the hereafter will be their share. Those who have invented polytheism and intercession, have created baseless concepts because in this way they equate truth with falsehood and oppression with injustice.

جَنّٰتُ عَدْنٍ يَّدْخُلُوْنَهَا وَمَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ اٰبَآىِٕهِمْ وَاَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيّٰتِهِمْ وَالْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ يَدْخُلُوْنَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ بَابٍ ﴿۲۳﴾ سَلٰمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا صَبَرْتُمْ فَنِعْمَ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ ﴿۲۴﴾[25]

These are the details of the successful fate of the hereafter mentioned in the previous verse.

It is human nature that upon benefitting from a favour, a person also deeply desires that his relatives or those dear to him also receive it. For this reason, God will unite his relatives with him too in Paradise on the condition that they are worthy of it. This is a basic condition which if not met will destroy the whole system of justice which is under discussion. However, this does not negate the bounty of God as per which He will unite a person's relatives with him even if they are worthy of a lower category in Paradise.

The sentence "so, how nice is the successful end" is not uttered by the angels. It is in fact a praise from the Almighty for the high rank they will ultimately receive in the Hereafter. In the previous verse, the words used are أُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ. Here in order to explain the majesty of the abode of the Hereafter, the words are فَنِعْمَ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ (so, how nice is the successful end).

وَالَّذِيْنَ يَنْقُضُوْنَ عَهْدَ اللّٰهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مِيْثَاقِهٖ وَيَقْطَعُوْنَ مَآ اَمَرَ اللّٰهُ بِهٖٓ اَنْ يُّوْصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُوْنَ فِي الْاَرْضِ ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوْٓءُ

25. Gardens of eternity in which they will enter and those also who will become worthy of it from among their forefathers and their wives and their children. And angels will come to them from every door and say: "Peace be to you because you remained steadfast. So, how nice is the successful end!"

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الدَّارِ ﴿٢٥﴾[26]

This is a depiction of the fate of the opposite lot.

The system of truth and justice envisaged by Islam is based on two pillars: God is one and that all humankind descends from one forefather, Adam. If these pillars are uprooted, it is impossible for a righteous society to come into being.

اَللّٰهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَقْدِرُ ۚ وَفَرِحُوْا بِالْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَمَا الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا فِى الْاٰخِرَةِ اِلَّا مَتَاعٌ ﴿٢٦﴾[27]

The actual construction is: اَللّٰهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَقْدِرُ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ. Because of concomitant indications, the words لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ are suppressed at the end. The word قَدَرَ means "to measure" but here it means "to reduce."

The word مَتَاعٌ is an undefined noun. The translation gives due deference to this style because in the verse it is used to connote scarcity.

This verse states the real reason of the denial of the disbelievers. Worldly leisures and wealth have made them arrogant and the Prophet's reminders of the hereafter weigh down heavily upon them. The fact is that it is God Who provides sustenance to whomsoever He wishes abundantly or scarcely. For those whom He provides abundantly, He wants them to show gratitude and for those whom He provides scarcely, He wans them to show patience. It is on these two pillars of gratitude and patience that the whole edifice of religion statnds. Those who become indifferent to the hereafter after being blessed with the trivial provisions of life, upon seeing the reward of the believers, will realize on the Day of Judgement that they traded these ordinary provisions for the eternal kingdom of Paradise.

Section IV: Verses (27-32)

It is mentioned in these verses that the arguments drawn from around people and from within them are not satisfying them. They demand that they will only believe in the veracity of the Prophet (sws) when they see a visual miracle. In response to this demand, they are told that the path to faith and guidance is opened after reflecting on the call of God's messengers. Those who do not adopt this path still remin blind even if they see all types of miracles.

Readers may proceed to study the verses.

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26. And cursed are those who break God's promise after making it and sever what God has directed to keep intact and spread disorder in the land and for them is also an evil fate in the next world.

27. God gives abundantly to whomsoever He wants and gives sparingly to whomsoever He wants and they are engrossed in the life of this world even though this life of the world is only a trivial provision with regard to the life of the next world.

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Text and Translation

وَ يَقُوْلُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَوْلَآ اُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ اٰيَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ ؕ قُلْ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَهْدِيْٓ اِلَيْهِ مَنْ اَنَابَ ﴿۲۷﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوْبُهُمْ
بِذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ ؕ اَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوْبُ ﴿۲۸﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ طُوْبٰى لَهُمْ وَحُسْنُ مَاٰبٍ ﴿۲۹﴾ كَذٰلِكَ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ فِيْٓ اُمَّةٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ
مِنْ قَبْلِهَآ اُمَمٌ لِّتَتْلُوَا عَلَيْهِمُ الَّذِيْٓ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ يَكْفُرُوْنَ بِالرَّحْمٰنِ ؕ قُلْ هُوَ رَبِّيْ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۫ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَاِلَيْهِ مَتَابِ ﴿۳۰﴾ وَلَوْ
اَنَّ قُرْاٰنًا سُيِّرَتْ بِهِ الْجِبَالُ اَوْ قُطِّعَتْ بِهِ الْاَرْضُ اَوْ كُلِّمَ بِهِ الْمَوْتٰى ؕ بَلْ لِّلّٰهِ الْاَمْرُ جَمِيْعًا ؕ اَفَلَمْ يَايْئَسِ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اَنْ لَّوْ يَشَآءُ اللّٰهُ لَهَدَى
النَّاسَ جَمِيْعًا ؕ وَلَا يَزَالُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا تُصِيْبُهُمْ بِمَا صَنَعُوْا قَارِعَةٌ اَوْ تَحُلُّ قَرِيْبًا مِّنْ دَارِهِمْ حَتّٰى يَاْتِيَ وَعْدُ اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُخْلِفُ
الْمِيْعَادَ ﴿۳۱﴾ وَلَقَدِ اسْتُهْزِئَ بِرُسُلٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ فَاَمْلَيْتُ لِلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا ثُمَّ اَخَذْتُهُمْ ۫ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عِقَابِ ﴿۳۲﴾

And those who disbelieved say: “Why was not a sign sent down to this person from his Lord?” Say: God leads astray whomsoever He desires and shows His way to those who turn to Him, who profess faith and whose hearts are comforted by this reminder of God. Listen! It is through the reminder of God that hearts are comforted. Those who professed faith and did righteous deeds, for them are glad tidings and a nice abode. (27-29)

We have sent you in this manner as a messenger in a nation before which many nations have gone by so that you may recite out to them the message We have revealed to you even though they are denying the Merciful God. Say: He only is my Lord; there is no deity except Him; I have trusted Him alone and towards Him shall be the return. Had a Qur’ān been revealed through which the mountains could be set in motion, or the earth was rent asunder or the dead could talk, even then they would not have accepted faith. In fact, all authority belongs to God. Did not the believers receive assurance that had God wanted, He would have guided all mankind? And some calamity or the other will keep visiting these disbelievers because of their deeds or will land near their settlement until the time of fulfilment of God’s promise arrives. God shall not go back on His promise. And before you also, messengers were mocked; so, I gave reprieve to the disbelievers. Then I seized them; so, how was My punishment. (30-32)

Explanation

وَ يَقُوْلُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَوْلَآ اُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ اٰيَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ ؕ قُلْ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَهْدِيْٓ اِلَيْهِ مَنْ اَنَابَ ﴿۲۷﴾[28]

The word اٰيَةٌ here refers to a palpable miracle. In other words, these people have shut their eyes to the signs found in the world around then and within their own selves. These signs embrace them from all sides and the Qur’ān too directs their attention to them. However, they insist that they will only believe in the veracity of God’s messenger

28. And those who disbelieved say: “Why was not a sign sent down to this person from his Lord?” Say: God leads astray whomsoever He desires and shows His way to those who turn to Him.

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when he shows them a miracle. In response to this demand, the Almighty reminds them of His established practice: He does not guide those who demand miracles; He only guides those who seek reality and turn to God for inner satisfaction after observing the signs around and within them. Those who have this urge in them.

As for those who want to see miracles, continue to stumble in life. God wants such people to remain away from the truth as have eyes but are still blind. If God wanted to forcefully make people as believers, He can show one better a miracle than the other; however, He wants that people use their intellect and then believe.

اَلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَ تَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوْبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ ؕ اَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوْبُ ﴿۲۸﴾[29]

This verse explains the words "those who turn to Him" of the previous verse. The expression "God's reminder" refers to the mention of God's attributes and His arguments mentioned in the Qur'ān. In other words, God guides only those who receive comfort and assurance from His attributes and His arguments. Those who do not adopt this path are forever deprived of the Qur'ān and demand miracles.

The last sentence of the verse cautions people towards precisely this aspect: only reflecting on the attributes of God provides mental satisfaction. If they want to receive this, they should be attentive to the call of the Prophet (sws) and deliberate on it, otherwise they will wander and stumble in every path they tread.

اَلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَ عَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ طُوْبٰى لَهُمْ وَ حُسْنُ مَاٰبٍ ﴿۲۹﴾[30]

The verse implies that all those who adopted God's way and traversed it with the provisions of faith and righteous deeds have glad tidings of a nice abode for them. As for those who await miracles, they will continue in this state until one day they will meet the fate destined for such intellectually blind people.

كَذٰلِكَ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ فِيْۤ اُمَّةٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهَاۤ اُمَمٌ لِّتَتْلُوَا عَلَيْهِمُ الَّذِيْۤ اَوْحَيْنَاۤ اِلَيْكَ وَ هُمْ يَكْفُرُوْنَ بِالرَّحْمٰنِ ؕ قُلْ هُوَ رَبِّيْ لَاۤ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۫ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَ اِلَيْهِ مَتَابِ ﴿۳۰﴾[31]

This verse also a response to the demand of miracles mentioned in verse 27. The

29. And those who disbelieved say: "Why was not a sign sent down to this person from his Lord?" Say: God leads astray whomsoever He desires and shows His way to those who turn to Him, who profess faith and whose hearts are comforted by this reminder of God.

30. Listen! It is through the reminder of God that hearts are comforted. Those who professed faith and did righteous deeds, for them are glad tidings and a nice abode.

31. We have sent you in this manner as a messenger in a nation before which many nations have gone by so that you may recite out to them the message We have revealed to you even though they are denying the Merciful God. Say: He only is my Lord; there is no deity except Him; I have trusted Him alone and towards Him shall be the return.

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Prophet (sws) should not worry about such demands but should read out to them the Book of God being revealed to him. Even if they continue to deny the Merciful God, the Prophet should adhere to his stance and say what the verse states. He should tell them that showing miracles is not his domain. This is God's prerogative and depends on His will and wisdom.

وَلَوْ اَنَّ قُرْاٰنًا سُيِّرَتْ بِهِ الْجِبَالُ اَوْ قُطِّعَتْ بِهِ الْاَرْضُ اَوْ كُلِّمَ بِهِ الْمَوْتٰى ؕ بَلْ لِّلّٰهِ الْاَمْرُ جَمِيْعًا ؕ اَفَلَمْ يَايْـَٔسِ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اَنْ لَّوْ يَشَآءُ اللّٰهُ لَهَدَى النَّاسَ جَمِيْعًا ؕ وَلَا يَزَالُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا تُصِيْبُهُمْ بِمَا صَنَعُوْا قَارِعَةٌ اَوْ تَحُلُّ قَرِيْبًا مِّنْ دَارِهِمْ حَتّٰى يَاْتِيَ وَعْدُ اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُخْلِفُ الْمِيْعَادَ ﴿۳۱﴾[32]

The answer to the conditional clause "had a Qur'ān been revealed through which the mountains could be set in motion, or the earth was rent asunder or the dead could talk," is suppressed but has been revealed in the translation thus: "even then they would not have accepted faith." In other words, they would have found an excuse to adhere to their disbelief. Thus their predecessors saw many miracles but they dismissed them as feats of magic and continued on their disbelief until God's punishment decided their fate.

The words "in fact, all authority belongs to God" mean that the Prophet (sws) should leave this matter to God. He knows what they are worthy of and how they should be dealt with. He opens the way of guidance only to them who are worthy of it in accordance with His law.

The words "did not the believers receive assurance that had God wanted, He would have guided all mankind?" sound assurance to pious Muslims. They want that a miracle be shown to the disbelievers as per their demand and desire; however, is it not sufficient assurance to them that if God wanted to force people to faith, He could have achieved this end in the blink of any eye; however, He has not done this because He wants people to use their sense and insight and reflect on the signs found around and within them, deliberate and understand the call of the messenger and the with full freedom adopt the path of truth.

The verse goes on to say that signs still continue to manifest themselves. Their purpose is to shake people and make hem open their eyes and listen to the call of the messenger. However, they do not learn any lesson from it and only await to be lashed by God's torment – only then will they believe but that would be of no use. The promised punishment is bound to come for God does not go back on His promise.

The وَعْدُ اللّٰهِ expression refers to God's torment about which every messenger has

32. Had a Qur'ān been revealed through which the mountains could be set in motion, or the earth was rent asunder or the dead could talk, even then they would not have accepted faith. In fact, all authority belongs to God. Did not the believers receive assurance that had God wanted, He would have guided all mankind? And some calamity or the other will keep visiting these disbelievers because of their deeds or will land near their settlement until the time of fulfilment of God's promise arrives. God shall not go back on His promise.

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informed his nation. If it does not listen to the call of its messenger, it is destroyed by God. In the times of God's messengers, many clear signs are sent to open the eyes and ears of people so that they become attentive to their calls.

وَلَقَدِ اسْتُهْزِئَ بِرُسُلٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ فَاَمْلَيْتُ لِلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا ثُمَّ اَخَذْتُهُمْ ۫ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عِقَابِ ﴿۳۲﴾[33]

This verse states the wisdom behind the delay in punishment. If their desire and demand to see it is not being fulfilled, then it is because God wants to give them respite. As a result of this, the truth is conveyed to them in its ultimate form and they are not left with any excuse to deny it.

If the Prophet's (sws) nation also continues to mock at him, it will be seized by God the way He seized those before it for this very wrongdoing.

The word عِقَابِ is actually عِقَابِي and the ي has been dropped for rhythm.

Section V: Verses (33-37)

In the subsequent verses it is stated that if their audacity to associate partners with God without any proof is on the basis of their self-invented deities, then the Prophet (sws) should tell them that these deities do not even exist. They are mere conjecture. These people will be faced with God's punishment in this world and in the next they will encounter an even sterner punishment. Only His believers who are monotheists are worthy of Paradise. If these people are denying this obvious relity, the Prophet (sws) should not be sad. Those among the People of the Book who are good and adhere to their own Book are very happy with the Book that has been revealed to him.

Readers may proceed to study the verses.

Text and Translation

اَفَمَنْ هُوَ قَآئِمٌ عَلٰى كُلِّ نَفْسٍۢ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ ۚ وَجَعَلُوْا لِلّٰهِ شُرَكَآءَ ۭ قُلْ سَمُّوْهُمْ ۭ اَمْ تُنَبِّـــُٔوْنَهٗ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي الْاَرْضِ اَمْ بِظَاهِرٍ مِّنَ الْقَوْلِ ۭ بَلْ زُيِّنَ لِلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مَكْرُهُمْ وَصُدُّوْا عَنِ السَّبِيْلِ ۭ وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ هَادٍ ﴿۳۳﴾ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَعَذَابُ الْاٰخِرَةِ اَشَقُّ ۚ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ وَّاقٍ ﴿۳۴﴾ مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِيْ وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُوْنَ ۭ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ ۭ اُكُلُهَا دَاۗىِٕمٌ وَّظِلُّهَا ۭ تِلْكَ عُقْبَى الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا ۠ وَّعُقْبَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ النَّارُ ﴿۳۵﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰتَيْنٰهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ يَفْرَحُوْنَ بِمَآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكَ وَمِنَ الْاَحْزَابِ مَنْ

33. And before you also, messengers were mocked; so, I gave reprieve to the disbelievers. Then I seized them; so, how was My punishment.

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يُّنَكِّرُ بَعْضَهٗ ؕ قُلْ اِنَّمَاۤ اُمِرْتُ اَنْ اَعْبُدَ اللّٰهَ وَلَاۤ اُشْرِكَ بِهٖ ؕ اِلَيْهِ اَدْعُوْا وَ اِلَيْهِ مَاٰبِ ﴿۳۶﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ
حُكْمًا عَرَبِيًّا ؕ وَلَئِنِ اتَّبَعْتَ اَهْوَآءَهُمْ بَعْدَ مَا جَآءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ ۙ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ وَّلِيٍّ وَّلَا وَاقٍ ﴿۳۷﴾

Then is he who will hold each person accountable [and they who have no power at all equal] and these people have made partners of God. Tell them: Speak up their names. Are you informing God of something of which He is unaware in His own earth or are you just uttering frivolous words? In fact, the scheme of these disbelievers has been made fair for them and they have been stopped from the path of the truth. And no one can guide those who God leads astray. For them is torment in the life of this world also and the torment of the Hereafter is much more severe. And there shall be none to save them from God. (33-34)

The portrait of the Paradise which has been promised to the God-fearing is that it shall have streams running below it; its fruits shall be eternal and its shade shall also be eternal. This is the fate of those who fear God and the fate of the disbelievers is Hell. (35)

And they, to whom We have given the Book, are happy at what has been revealed to you and there are also some among these factions who reject parts of it. Say: I have been directed to worship God alone and to associate none with Him. I call towards Him only and to Him alone shall be my return. And for this reason, We have revealed this Book as a decree in Arabic. And, if after this true knowledge that has come to you, you follow their religious innovations, then you will not have any helper or saviour against God. (36-37)

Explanation

اَفَمَنْ هُوَ قَآئِمٌ عَلٰى كُلِّ نَفْسٍۢ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ ۚ وَجَعَلُوْا لِلّٰهِ شُرَكَآءَ ؕ قُلْ سَمُّوْهُمْ ؕ اَمْ تُنَبِّـُٔوْنَهٗ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِى الْاَرْضِ اَمْ بِظَاهِرٍ
مِّنَ الْقَوْلِ ؕ بَلْ زُيِّنَ لِلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مَكْرُهُمْ وَصُدُّوْا عَنِ السَّبِيْلِ ؕ وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ هَادٍ ﴿۳۳﴾[34]

The sentence اَفَمَنْ هُوَ قَآئِمٌ عَلٰى كُلِّ نَفْسٍۢ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ means that He Who is watching over the words and deeds of very soul and also one Who will hold it accountable for its words and deeds. A part of this sentence is suppressed. It is revealed in the translation. Evident from this suppression is the hatred and abhorrence of the speaker. It is as if He does not even want to tolerate the expression of such a statement.

The anger and disgrace hidden in the words “speak up their names” is so evident

34. Then is he who will hold each person accountable [and they who have no power at all equal] and these people have made partners of God. Tell them: Speak up their names. Are you informing God of something of which He is unaware in His own earth or are you just uttering frivolous words? In fact, the scheme of these disbelievers has been made fair for them and they have been stopped from the path of the truth. And no one can guide those who God leads astray.

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that it does not need expression. Obviously, the idolaters could only have taken the names of the the idols they used to worship like Habl, Lāt, ‘Uzzā, Nā’ilah. However, without even waiting for an answer, their existence is negated thus: “Are you informing God of something of which He is unaware in His own earth or are you just uttering frivolous words?” The style used in the actual Arabic words is what we call نفی الشیء بنفی لازمه (negating a thing by negating its consequences). In other words, if something exists in this world, then it is essential that its creator know about its existence. So, if the creator does not even know about is existence, then how can it exist? It is on this principle that the Almighty has sarcastically asked them in this verse whether they are increasing God’s information or just uttering frivolous words.

The last part of the verse implies that those who supporting polytheism are doing so only to save their authority and control, which they hold very dear. On the other hand, the Qur’ān and the Prophet (sws) have exposed this creed to such an extent that the greatest of its advocates know that it is baseless. The only reason because of which they are clinging to it is because of their self-interest. They are not able to give up their ancestral position of religious authority. Thus in spite of knowing that the Qur’ān is calling them to the truth, they are adamant on their deviant ways. Such people who intentionally deny the truth and support evil face the law of God, and who has the power to guide such people.

لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَعَذَابُ الْاٰخِرَةِ اَشَقُّ ۚ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ مِنْ وَّاقٍ ﴿٣٤﴾[35]

Readers may keep in mind the established practice of God in this regard while understanding this verse: If a nation does not profess faith after the truth has been communicated to it by a messenger of God, then it is necessarily destroyed.

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِيْ وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُوْنَ ؕ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ ؕ اُكُلُهَا دَآئِمٌ وَّ ظِلُّهَا ؕ تِلْكَ عُقْبَى الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا ۖ وَّ عُقْبَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ النَّارُ ﴿٣٥﴾[36]

In the expression اُكُلُهَا دَآئِمٌ وَّظِلُّهَا, the predicate of ظِلُّهَا is suppressed because of concomitant indications. The sense is: اُكُلُهَا دَآئِمٌ وَّظِلُّهَا دَآئِمٌ. This verse, in contrast, depicts the fate of those who professed faith in God while fearing Him.

وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰتَيْنٰهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ يَفْرَحُوْنَ بِمَآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكَ وَمِنَ الْاَحْزَابِ مَنْ يُّنْكِرُ بَعْضَهٗ ؕ قُلْ اِنَّمَآ اُمِرْتُ اَنْ اَعْبُدَ اللّٰهَ وَلَآ

35. For them is torment in the life of this world also and the torment of the Hereafter is much more severe. And there shall be none to save them from God.

36. The portrait of the Paradise which has been promised to the God-fearing is that it shall have streams running below it; its fruits shall be eternal and its shade shall also be eternal. This is the fate of those who fear God and the fate of the disbelievers is Hell.

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اُشۡرِكَ بِهٖ ؕ اِلَيۡهِ اَدۡعُوۡا وَ اِلَيۡهِ مَاٰبِ ﴿۳۶﴾[37]

The expression وَ الَّذِيۡنَ اٰتَيۡنٰهُمُ الۡكِتٰبَ refers to the righteous among the People of the Book, the details of which have been mentioned under verses 83-84 of Sūrah al-Mā’idah. There were people in the Arabian society who were waiting for the last Prophet (sws) as a result of the prophecies found about him in their scriptures. For this reason, when they saw the corroboration of these prophecies in his message and the book brought by him, they warmly welcomed him. This righteous group among the People of the Book has been mentioned abundantly in the Qur’ān, and generally the active voice has been used in their mention – as is the case here. The purpose of their mention is to assure the Prophet (sws) as well: he should not care about the ignorant and the stubborn who are making fun of him when a group from among the bearers of the divine Book is welcoming him. Moreover, the purpose of this mention is also to rebuke those People of the Book who were rejecting and depriving themselves of its blessings even though they were seeing a group among them behaving positively.

The words “there are also some among these factions who reject parts of it” refer to the opposing factions of the Jews, Christians and the Idolaters. The nature of their adversity was not that they differed in every part of the Qur’ān, and how at all could this be possible too! The difference between the teachings of the Qur’an and that of the Torah and the Injīl was primarily in areas where the People of the Book did some interpolation in their books. The Idolaters of Arabia too differed with the Qur’ān in its message of monotheism. Among the Christians who followed Saint Paul, the difference also hinged on their polytheism.

The last part of the verse implies that the Prophet’s adversaries should be clear that he himself does not all think he would receive help from someone other than God. If they think that they can pressurize the Prophet (sws) to change his stance, then this is a desire that can never be fulfilled.

The construction in وَ اِلَيۡهِ مَاٰبِ is the same as in كَانَ عِقَابِ verse 32 earlier.

وَ كَذٰلِكَ اَنۡزَلۡنٰهُ حُكۡمًا عَرَبِيًّا ؕ وَ لَئِنِ اتَّبَعۡتَ اَهۡوَآءَهُمۡ بَعۡدَ مَا جَآءَكَ مِنَ الۡعِلۡمِ ۙ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللّٰهِ مِنۡ وَّلِيٍّ وَّ لَا وَاقٍ ﴿۳۷﴾[38]

In the Arabic language, كَذٰلِكَ is also used to mean “hence” or “for this reason.” Here it is used in the latter meaning. While referring to what the Prophet (sws) was directed

37. And they, to whom We have given the Book, are happy at what has been revealed to you and there are also some among these factions who reject parts of it. Say: I have been directed to worship God alone and to associate none with Him. I call towards Him only and to Him alone shall be my return.

38. And for this reason, We have revealed this Book as a decree in Arabic. And, if after this true knowledge that has come to you, you follow their religious innovations, then you will not have any helper or saviour against God.

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to in the previous verse, it is stated here that this Book has been revealed for the dissemination of that very directive.

The words “revealed this Book as a decree in Arabic” refer to the fact that this Book that has to be obeyed; since it is in the Arabic language, it is a favour to all those whose native tongue is Arabic and is also a means of conclusive communication to the truth to them. In other words, this is not a request; it is of the form of an order that must be complied with; it is for the Prophet (sws) and for all the Arabs too. If it is not followed, then after a period of time all those who reject it will reach the same fate which is ordained for those who deny a messenger of God. It is known that a messenger of God is like a court of justice for his nation. He does not bring a request to people; rather he brings the directive of God that must be followed, otherwise punishment will be meted out.

The word اَهۡوَآءَ refers to religious innovations, as has been clarified at a number of instances. This is because such innovations are not based on knowledge; they are based on desires. Here the purpose is to specially refer to the polytheistic innovations of the Arabs. “Knowledge” here refers to true knowledge that has come to them in the form of the Qur’ān.

It may be noted that though apparently the Prophet (sws) is addressed in this verse, all the rebuke in it is directed at the idolaters. The eloquence of saying this while addressing the Prophet (sws) is that the addressees are fully warned that if a prophet of God cannot escape God’s punishment if he disobeys this directive, how can others escape punishment.

Section V: Verses (38-43)

These verses form the concluding section of the *sūrah*. The Prophet (sws) is assured that he should not be worried on the ever new objections and demands of miracles of his opponents. He should continue doing his work and leave the matter of miracles to God. These people may not be seeing it, but the signs of the dominance of the truth are becoming evident in this land as well. The word of God is certain to be fulfilled and none can stop His decision from materializing. The schemes they are plotting are not new; such plotters have existed in the past too. God will make these schemes end in vain and soon these people will know who will finally succeed. If they do not acknowledge him as a messenger, he should declare to them that the evidence of God and those who have knowledge of the Book is sufficient between him and them.

Readers may proceed to study the verses.

Text and Translation

وَلَقَدۡ اَرۡسَلۡنَا رُسُلًا مِّنۡ قَبۡلِكَ وَجَعَلۡنَا لَهُمۡ اَزۡوَاجًا وَّذُرِّيَّةً ؕ وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُوۡلٍ اَنۡ يَّاۡتِىَ بِاٰيَةٍ اِلَّا بِاِذۡنِ

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اللّٰهِ ؕ لِكُلِّ اَجَلٍ كِتَابٌ ﴿۳۸﴾ يَمْحُوا اللّٰهُ مَا يَشَآءُ وَيُثْبِتُ ۚ وَعِنْدَهٗٓ اُمُّ الْكِتٰبِ ﴿۳۹﴾ وَاِنْ مَّا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ
الَّذِيْ نَعِدُهُمْ اَوْ نَتَوَفَّيَنَّكَ فَاِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلٰغُ وَعَلَيْنَا الْحِسَابُ ﴿۴۰﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّا نَاْتِي الْاَرْضَ نَنْقُصُهَا
مِنْ اَطْرَافِهَا ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يَحْكُمُ لَا مُعَقِّبَ لِحُكْمِهٖ ؕ وَهُوَ سَرِيْعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿۴۱﴾ وَقَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
فَلِلّٰهِ الْمَكْرُ جَمِيْعًا ؕ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ؕ وَسَيَعْلَمُ الْكُفّٰرُ لِمَنْ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ ﴿۴۲﴾ وَيَقُوْلُ الَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا لَسْتَ مُرْسَلًا ؕ قُلْ كَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ شَهِيْدًا بَيْنِيْ وَبَيْنَكُمْ ۙ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهٗ عِلْمُ الْكِتٰبِ ﴿۴۳﴾

And We sent messengers before you also and gave them wives and children as well. And no messenger has the authority to show a sign without God's permission. Everything has an appointed time and every time is written down. God erases whatever He wants and keeps whatever He wants and with Him is the original Book. (38-39)

And We shall show you some part of the warning We are sounding them or give you death. Nonetheless, your responsibility is only to communicate; taking account is Our responsibility. Do they not see that We are closing in upon the territory by reducing it from its borders? God decides. And there is none to ward off His decision and He is very swift in taking account. Those before them also schemed; but all schemes are in God's control. He knows whatever each soul does. And these disbelievers will also soon know for whom is the success of the hereafter. (40-42)

And these disbelievers say: "You have not been sent by God." Say: Sufficient is God's witness between you and me and the witness of those who have the knowledge of the Book. (43)

Explanation

وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ اَزْوَاجًا وَّذُرِّيَّةً ؕ وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُوْلٍ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَ بِاٰيَةٍ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ لِكُلِّ اَجَلٍ
كِتَابٌ ﴿۳۸﴾[39]

This verse answers two objections of the Prophet's opponent without citing them. First, if Muḥammad (sws) claims to be God's messenger, why would God make a human being like them a messenger? He has a whole army of angels; why could not He have chosen someone from them for this purpose? Second, why is not the messenger's threat of punishment not materializing if he is truthful in his claim? He could have at least shown them a sign of it which would make it easier for them to believe in his veracity.

39. And We sent messengers before you also and gave them wives and children as well. And no messenger has the authority to show a sign without God's permission. Everything has an appointed time and every time is written down.

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يَمْحُوا اللّٰهُ مَا يَشَآءُ وَيُثْبِتُ ۚ وَعِنْدَهٗٓ اُمُّ الْكِتٰبِ ﴿٣٩﴾[40]

The construction of the verse is thus: يَمْحُوا اللّٰهُ مَا يَشَآءُ وَيُثْبِتُ مَا يَشَآءُ

Only God has the authority to delete or keep intact what is written.

وَاِنْ مَّا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِيْ نَعِدُهُمْ اَوْ نَتَوَفَّيَنَّكَ فَاِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلٰغُ وَعَلَيْنَا الْحِسَابُ ﴿٤٠﴾[41]

Either of the two possibilities alluded to in the verse will ensue based on God’s will and wisdom. The Prophet (sws) does not have a say in this and hence should not worry. His sole responsibility is to deliver the message; holding people accountable for it is God’s domain.

اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّا نَاْتِي الْاَرْضَ نَنْقُصُهَا مِنْ اَطْرَافِهَا ۭ وَاللّٰهُ يَحْكُمُ لَا مُعَقِّبَ لِحُكْمِهٖ ۭ وَهُوَ سَرِيْعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٤١﴾[42]

The word “territory” here refers to the land of Makkah.

The verse refers to the victories which Muslims were gaining in the whereabouts of Makkah. The implication is that if they really want to see a sign, why do they not observe that the influence of God’s call is spreading in the nearby tribes. As a result, their own territory is being reduced and it is very evident that one day this city of theirs shall also be vanquished by the forces of Islam.

The call of Islam began from Makkah but the Quraysh left no stone unturned to oppress and suppress its upholders. Gradually, the tribes who lived nearby entered the fold of Islam and such was its influence in Madīnah that it was made the place of migration for the believers by God. In this phase of preaching, some People of the Book also started to support Islam, as is referred to earlier. In short, Islam was oppressed in its own house but outside it, its influence began to increase manifold: tribe after tribe was forsaking the political authority of the Quraysh and its religion of polytheism and submitting to Islam and its Prophet. This should have been an eye-opening sign for the disbelievers who were demanding a sign.

The “decision” mentioned in the verse is the dominance of Islam; it is God’s decree which none can ward off.

This topic has also been discused in verse 44 of Sūrah al-Anbiyā’ in the following words:

بَلْ مَتَّعْنَا هٰٓؤُلَآءِ وَاٰبَآءَهُمْ حَتّٰى طَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْعُمُرُ ۭ اَفَلَا يَرَوْنَ اَنَّا نَاْتِي الْاَرْضَ نَنْقُصُهَا مِنْ اَطْرَافِهَا ۭ اَفَهُمُ

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40. God erases whatever He wants and keeps whatever He wants and with Him is the original Book.

41. And We shall show you some part of the warning We are sounding them or give you death. Nonetheless, your responsibility is only to communicate; taking account is Our responsibility.

42. Do they not see that We are closing in upon the territory by reducing it from its borders? God decides. And there is none to ward off His decision and He is very swift in taking account.

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الْغٰلِبُوْنَ (٢١: ٤٤)

In fact, the real thing is that We provided means and resources of the world to them and to their forefathers until a long period passed over them in this situation. [For this reason, they began to arrogantly believe that they will always remain dominant like this]. Yet, are they not seeing that We are moving towards their land diminishing it from its borders. So [is this a sign of this that] these people are going to remain dominant? (21:44)

It is probably on the basis of the verse under discussion that some people regard this *sūrah* to be Madīnan. They thought that the verse is actually referring to the victories of the Muslims in war in the land of Madīnah. However, in my opinion, it refers to the victories Islam was notching up in the field of dissemination and preaching. Moreover, this verse is also found in Sūrah al-Anbiyā’ with a slight change of words and everyone unanimously regards this *sūrah* to be Makkan. However, this much is evident from the words of this verse that this *sūrah* belongs to that period of the Makkan phase when the message of Islam was having a profound influence among the tribes that lived in the whereabouts of Makkah and in Madīnah. The control of the Quraysh was weakening. In particular, they had lost respect in the eyes of those living outside Makkah because of their wave of oppression let lost on the Prophet (sws) and his followers.

وَقَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلِلّٰهِ الْمَكْرُ جَمِيْعًا ؕ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ؕ وَسَيَعْلَمُ الْكُفّٰرُ لِمَنْ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ ﴿٤٢﴾[43]

In other words, while their fate in this world has been depicted in the previous verse, this verse says that they will soon come to know about their fate in the next world too.

وَيَقُوْلُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَسْتَ مُرْسَلًا ؕ قُلْ كَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ شَهِيْدًا بَيْنِيْ وَبَيْنَكُمْ ۙ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهٗ عِلْمُ الْكِتٰبِ ﴿٤٣﴾[44]

The verse refers to the scholars among the People of the Book mentioned in verse 36. This brings us to the end of this *sūrah’s* explanation.

وَاٰخِرُ دَعْوٰىهُمْ اَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ (and our last prayer is that gratitude be to God, Lord of the world)

---

43. Those before them also schemed; but all schemes are in God’s control. He knows whatever each soul does. And these disbelievers will also soon know for whom is the success of the hereafter.

44. And these disbelievers say: “You have not been sent by God.” Say: Sufficient is God’s witness between you and me and the witness of those who have the knowledge of the Book.

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Tadabbur i Qur'ān

14 Surāh Ibrāhīm

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Surāh Ibrāhīm

Theme

In verse 41 of the previous *sūrah*, Sūrah al-Ra'd, the Quryash were threatened by the words "Do they not see that We are closing in upon this territory by reducing it from its borders?" while the Muslims were given glad tidings of success. However, in both cases, the style adopted was of the nature of insinuation. In this *sūrah*, this warning and these glad tidings are stated in a rather explicit way. It is made evident to the Quryash that there is no basis either in the earth or in the heavens for the message of evil that they stand for in the current conflict between truth and evil in the land of Makkah. It is like an evil tree that has grown from garbage and dirt. It does not have any roots and can be easily extracted from the ground. It can only remain intact if there is no one to uproot it and not because it is firmly grounded. Now God has sent those who can pull it out and very soon it will be dispensed with. On the other hand, the example of Islam's message is that of an evergreen tree which is very deeply rooted and whose branches are spread in the sky. God will strengthen the believers not only in this world but also in the hereafter provided they persevere on their task of delivering the truth and fought the trials that they face in this way by trusting God.

Those aspects of the anecdotes of Moses (sws) and other prophets are hinted at which reinforce the actual theme. At the end, the anecdote of Abraham (sws) is cited. The reason of his migration from his homeland to the desolate desert of Arabia is referred to and the supplication he offered for this land is alluded to. Also stated is his heart's desire when he was settling his progeny in this land and what he wanted his Lord to do for him. The purpose is to mirror the history of the Quraysh to them so that they can estimate what was expected of them and what they have actually become.

Though this introduction is sufficient to study the structural coherence in the *sūrah*, I will still analyze its meanings:

Analysis of Meanings

Verses (1-4): The Prophet (sws) is addressed and told that the Qur'ān has been revealed so the he can take people out from the darkness of their evil beliefs and misdeeds to the light of true faith and righteous deeds. After that the fate of people who will reject it is stated. The Quraysh are threatened that by revealing the Qur'ān in

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their tongue, God has conclusively delivered the truth to them. The Prophet (sws) is assured that it is God's grace which is instrumental in people accepting faith. He will give whatever a person deserves. As for the Prophet (sws), his responsibility is to only deliver the message.

Verses (5-17): It is stated that Moses (sws) and other prophets too came with the same objective, and they had to face a lot of hardships in this cause. However, they showed perseverance and steadfastness. God rewarded them for this behaviour by granting them dominance and by destroying their enemies. The purpose of narrating these anecdotes is to explain to the Prophet (sws) and his companions that ultimately they too will remain dominant in this conflict. But they must show perseverance in the initial phases and gratitude in the last phase.

Verses (18-22): The fate of the disbelievers and the idolaters in the hereafter is depicted. All their efforts will end up in vain and will just vanish in the air. Leaders and their followers will mutually curse one another. So much so, Satan will disown his followers too. He will tell them to curse themselves instead of cursing him because they themselves are responsible for their misfortune.

Verses (23-27): On the other hand, the believers in the hereafter will greet and congratulate each other. Just as God through His profound and forceful word made them succeed in the previous world, He will make them succeed in the hereafter too.

Verses (28-34): The leaders of the Quraysh are warned that they used God's favours a means for their disbelief and polytheism and in this way led their people to Hell. In this regard, Muslims too are urged to be diligent in the prayer and spend for the cause of God openly and secretly. The purpose of this advice is to guide the Muslims that it is this prayer which will vouch for their veracity before God and it was to fulfil this objective that Abraham (sws) settled his progeny in a desolate piece of land, as is mentioned ahead.

Verses (35-41): The supplications made by Abraham (sws) are referred to which he made before God for the land of Makkah where he had migrated to Makkah and for his children who were being settled there by him. The purpose is to make evident to the Quraysh that the whole life that they are leading is totally against the supplications and desires of Abraham (sws). If anyone is fulfilling his objective, it is Prophet Muḥammad (sws) and his followers. However, the Quraysh have become their avowed enemies.

Verses (42-52): This concluding section of the *sūrah* is replete with warnings.

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Section I: Verses (1-4)

Text and Translation

بِسۡمِ اللّٰہِ الرَّحۡمٰنِ الرَّحِیۡمِ

الٓرٰ ۟ کِتٰبٌ اَنۡزَلۡنٰہُ اِلَیۡکَ لِتُخۡرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمٰتِ اِلَی النُّوۡرِ ۙ بِاِذۡنِ رَبِّہِمۡ اِلٰی صِرَاطِ الۡعَزِیۡزِ الۡحَمِیۡدِ ۙ﴿۱﴾ اللّٰہِ الَّذِیۡ لَہٗ مَا فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ مَا فِی الۡاَرۡضِ ؕ وَ وَیۡلٌ لِّلۡکٰفِرِیۡنَ مِنۡ عَذَابٍ شَدِیۡدِ ۙ﴿۲﴾ الَّذِیۡنَ یَسۡتَحِبُّوۡنَ الۡحَیٰوۃَ الدُّنۡیَا عَلَی الۡاٰخِرَۃِ وَ یَصُدُّوۡنَ عَنۡ سَبِیۡلِ اللّٰہِ وَ یَبۡغُوۡنَہَا عِوَجًا ؕ اُولٰٓئِکَ فِیۡ ضَلٰلٍۢ بَعِیۡدٍ ﴿۳﴾ وَ مَاۤ اَرۡسَلۡنَا مِنۡ رَّسُوۡلٍ اِلَّا بِلِسَانِ قَوۡمِہٖ لِیُبَیِّنَ لَہُمۡ ؕ فَیُضِلُّ اللّٰہُ مَنۡ یَّشَآءُ وَ یَہۡدِیۡ مَنۡ یَّشَآءُ ؕ وَ ہُوَ الۡعَزِیۡزُ الۡحَکِیۡمُ ﴿۴﴾

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Ever-Merciful.

This is Sūrah Alif Lām Rā. This is the Book We have revealed to you so that you may bring out people from expansive darkness into light with the permission of their Lord to the path of the God Who is powerful; has all praiseworthy attributes. The God to Whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth and for the disbelievers, there is destruction through a severe torment. For those who give preference to the life of this world over the Hereafter and stop [people] from the way of God and want to create diversion in it. These people have deviated far from the truth. And whichever messenger We sent, We sent in the language of his nation so that he can make them fully understand. Thus whomsoever God wants, He leads him astray and guides whomsoever He wants. And He is Powerful and Wise. (1-4)

Explanation

الٓرٰ ۟ کِتٰبٌ اَنۡزَلۡنٰہُ اِلَیۡکَ لِتُخۡرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمٰتِ اِلَی النُّوۡرِ ۙ بِاِذۡنِ رَبِّہِمۡ اِلٰی صِرَاطِ الۡعَزِیۡزِ الۡحَمِیۡدِ ۙ﴿۱﴾[1]

I have comprehensively dealt with the isolated letters (*ḥurūf al-muqaṭṭa'āt*) as the beginning of Sūrah al-Baqarah.

Expansive darkness here refers to the darkness of faith and deeds and light here refers to the light of faith and righteous deeds. There are thousands of paths which lead astray; however, the path of guidance is just one. For this reason, the word used for darkness occurs in the plural and that for light in the singular.

1. This is Sūrah Alif Lām Rā. This is the Book We have revealed to you so that you may bring out people from expansive darkness into light with the permission of their Lord to the path of the God Who is powerful; has all praiseworthy attributes.

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The verse says that only they will be led to light from darkness who are provided its urge from God. It is He Who will guide those who are worthy of being guided and will let those wander in darkness who deserve this. The implication is that the responsibility of the prophet is to only communicate the message; bringing them to the path of truth is not his duty.

The last part of the verse "to the path of the God Who is powerful; has all praiseworthy attributes" explains the word "light." It refers to the path that leads to God Who has these attributes. Since God is powerful, one should only fear Him and since he has all praiseworthy attributes, only He deserves to be praised and all hopes should be pinned on him.

اللّٰهِ الَّذِیْ لَهٗ مَا فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِی الْاَرْضِ ؕ وَوَیْلٌ لِّلْكٰفِرِیْنَ مِنْ عَذَابٍ شَدِیْدِ ۙ﴿۳﴾ الَّذِیْنَ یَسْتَحِبُّوْنَ الْحَیٰوةَ الدُّنْیَا عَلَى الْاٰخِرَةِ وَیَصُدُّوْنَ عَنْ سَبِیْلِ اللّٰهِ وَیَبْغُوْنَهَا عِوَجًا ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ فِیْ ضَلٰلٍۢ بَعِیْدٍ ﴿۴﴾[2]

The verse points to their real reason of rejection: they are not ready to give up their personal interests for the sake of the hereafter. Thus not only have they themselves turned away from the path of God, they also try as much as they can to stop others from it. They also try to contort the path that leads to God to take it to their alleged deities and try to persuade people that if they want to reach God, then it is through these side-ways.

وَمَاۤ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُوْلٍ اِلَّا بِلِسَانِ قَوْمِهٖ لِیُبَیِّنَ لَهُمْ ؕ فَیُضِلُّ اللّٰهُ مَنْ یَّشَآءُ وَیَهْدِیْ مَنْ یَّشَآءُ ؕ وَهُوَ الْعَزِیْزُ الْحَكِیْمُ ﴿۴﴾[3]

This verse states God's favour to the Arabs. The purpose is to make them realize that they should give due regard to this favour of being sent a messenger and book in their own language.

The verse implies that as far as the Prophet (sws) is concerned, his job is to fully deliver the truth – which he has already done and is still doing. As far as people accepting faith is concerned, it depends on the will of God and He is powerful and wise. His will is governed by His wisdom. Those who deserve guidance according to His wisdom will be guided and vice versa. If a person uses his innate abilities, he is provided with a further urge and thirst for guidance and if someone does not give them due regard, the guidance which is given to them is taken away, what to speak of

2. The God to Whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth and for the disbelievers, there is destruction through a severe torment. For those who give preference to the life of this world over the Hereafter and stop [people] from the way of God and want to create diversion in it. These people have deviated far from the truth.

3. And whichever messenger We sent, We sent in the language of his nation so that he can make them fully understand. Thus whomsoever God wants, He leads him astray and guides whomsoever He wants. And He is Powerful and Wise.

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being guided further. This established practice of God has been referred at a number of instances in this exegesis.

Section II: Verses (5-8)

In this section, the anecdote of Moses (sws) is alluded to. He was also sent to bring out his people from darkness to light. Thus he fulfilled this responsibility and with God's help he liberated them from the shackles of the Pharaoh and his people. Moses (sws) is also informed of this decision of God that if he gives due regard to God's favour and remains grateful, he will be blessed further. On the other hand, if he is ungrateful, he will face God's stern punishment. The purpose of this reminder was to warn the Jews who had stared to openly support the Quraysh against Islam. Just as the Jews had forgotten the teachings of Abraham (sws), they had also shut off their ears to the teachings of Moses (sws).

Readers may now proceed to study the verses.

Text and Translation

وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا مُوْسٰى بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اَنْ اَخْرِجْ قَوْمَكَ مِنَ الظُّلُمٰتِ اِلَى النُّوْرِ ۙ وَذَكِّرْهُمْ بِاَيّٰىمِ اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ
لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُوْرٍ ﴿۵﴾ وَ اِذْ قَالَ مُوْسٰى لِقَوْمِهِ اذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَةَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ اِذْ اَنْجٰىكُمْ مِّنْ اٰلِ فِرْعَوْنَ
يَسُوْمُوْنَكُمْ سُوْٓءَ الْعَذَابِ وَيُذَبِّحُوْنَ اَبْنَآءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُوْنَ نِسَآءَكُمْ ؕ وَفِيْ ذٰلِكُمْ بَلَآءٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿۶﴾
وَاِذْ تَاَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَاَزِيْدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ اِنَّ عَذَابِيْ لَشَدِيْدٌ ﴿۷﴾ وَقَالَ مُوْسٰٓى اِنْ تَكْفُرُوْٓا
اَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ جَمِيْعًا ۙ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَغَنِيٌّ حَمِيْدٌ ﴿۸﴾

And We had sent Moses with Our signs: "Bring out your people from darkness into light and remind them of the memorable days of God." Indeed, there are great signs in them for those who are steadfast and grateful. (5)

And recall when Moses said to his nation: "Remember the favour of God on your selves that He delivered you from the people of the Pharaoh who would afflict you with extremely grave torments and would slaughter your sons and let your women live. And there indeed was a great trial in this from your Lord." And remember when your Lord said: "If you are grateful, I shall give you more and if you are ungrateful, My punishment will be very severe as well." And Moses said: "If you and all people of the earth are ungrateful, you will not in any way harm God. And He is self-sufficient and has all praiseworthy attributes." (6-8)

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Explanation

وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا مُوْسٰى بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اَنْ اَخْرِجْ قَوْمَكَ مِنَ الظُّلُمٰتِ اِلَى النُّوْرِ ۙ وَذَكِّرْهُمْ بِاَيّٰىمِ اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُوْرٍ ۝[4]

The signs mentioned in this verse refer to the staff and to white hand of Moses (sws). They are alluded to in detail at various instances in the Qur'ān.

When the word "days" occurs in this way, it refers to memorable and historic ones. Thus the expression ایام العرب means the "wars of the Arabs." Similarly, the expression ایام اللہ refers to the historic days in which the Almighty punished disobedient nations and saved His faithful servants from their aggression and oppression.

When Moses (sws) began his preaching, he and his nation had to face a lot of oppression from the Pharaoh and his people. God ultimately destroyed the Pharaoh and his followers and saved the Israelites. The last part of the verse implies that Muslims too are facing a trial. If they remain steadfast in this phase, they will succeed and will be grateful to God for His favours and blessings.

وَ اِذْ قَالَ مُوْسٰى لِقَوْمِهِ اذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَةَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ اِذْ اَنْجٰىكُمْ مِّنْ اٰلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُوْمُوْنَكُمْ سُوْٓءَ الْعَذَابِ وَيُذَبِّحُوْنَ اَبْنَآءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُوْنَ نِسَآءَكُمْ ؕ وَفِيْ ذٰلِكُمْ بَلَآءٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ عَظِيْمٌ ۝[5]

The word اٰل not only refers to family and but also to followers.

This verse alludes to the speech Moses (sws) delivered before his nation after their liberation from the shackles of the Pharaoh. He wanted to remind his nation that they had successfully passed through a very tough trial merely because of God's help. Hence they should keep this favour of God in mind, continue to remain thankful to Him and not once again get inebriated in sins which previously resulted in the punishment of slavery to the Pharaoh. This speech of Moses (sws) is meant to remind the Israelites of the times of the Prophet (sws) that they have forgotten the advice of Moses (sws) and are once again following the footsteps of Satan. This attitude of evasion from Islam would result in their own doom.

وَاِذْ تَاَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَاَزِيْدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ اِنَّ عَذَابِيْ لَشَدِيْدٌ ۝[6]

This verse too is meant to warn the Israelites of the times of the Prophet (sws) and

4. And We had sent Moses with Our signs: "Bring out your people from darkness into light and remind them of the memorable days of God." Indeed, there are great signs in them for those who are steadfast and grateful.

5. And recall when Moses said to his nation: "Remember the favour of God on your selves that He delivered you from the people of the Pharaoh who would afflict you with extremely grave torments and would slaughter your sons and let your women live. And there indeed was a great trial in this from your Lord."

6. And remember when your Lord said: "If you are grateful, I shall give you more and if you are ungrateful, My punishment will be very severe as well."

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the words "your Lord" clearly show that it was addressed to them.

وَقَالَ مُوْسٰٓى اِنْ تَكْفُرُوْٓا اَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ جَمِيْعًا ۙ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَغَنِيٌّ حَمِيْدٌ ۝٨ [7]

Here Moses (sws) has warned his nation that this demand of being thankful to God is not because He needs their thankfulness in any way or it increases His splendour and majesty. He does not require it at all and has all praiseworthy attributes. This attitude of gratitude is instrumental in producing blessings for them actually because, as pointed out earlier, it makes God increase His favours upon people.

Section III: Verses (9-17)

The address in this section is though general but it is directed at the Muslims. They are assured that the anecdotes of all messengers bear witness that though people do face a lot of hardships in the cause of God – so much so, at times one has to leave his house and belongings – but the believers ultimately are successful.

Readers may study the verses in the light of this background.

Text and Translation

اَلَمْ يَاْتِكُمْ نَبَؤُا الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ قَوْمِ نُوْحٍ وَّ عَادٍ وَّ ثَمُوْدَ ۛ وَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ ۛ لَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ ۭ جَآءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ فَرَدُّوْٓا اَيْدِيَهُمْ فِيْٓ اَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَقَالُوْٓا اِنَّا كَفَرْنَا بِمَآ اُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهٖ وَ اِنَّا لَفِيْ شَكٍّ مِّمَّا تَدْعُوْنَنَآ اِلَيْهِ مُرِيْبٍ ۝٩ قَالَتْ رُسُلُهُمْ اَفِي اللّٰهِ شَكٌّ فَاطِرِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ ۭ يَدْعُوْكُمْ لِيَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ ذُنُوْبِكُمْ وَ يُؤَخِّرَكُمْ اِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۭ قَالُوْٓا اِنْ اَنْتُمْ اِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا ۭ تُرِيْدُوْنَ اَنْ تَصُدُّوْنَا عَمَّا كَانَ يَعْبُدُ اٰبَآؤُنَا فَاْتُوْنَا بِسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ۝١٠ قَالَتْ لَهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ اِنْ نَّحْنُ اِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ وَلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَمُنُّ عَلٰي مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ ۭ وَمَا كَانَ لَنَآ اَنْ نَّاْتِيَكُمْ بِسُلْطٰنٍ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ۭ وَعَلَي اللّٰهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ۝١١ وَمَا لَنَآ اَلَّا نَتَوَكَّلَ عَلَي اللّٰهِ وَقَدْ هَدٰىنَا سُبُلَنَا ۭ وَلَنَصْبِرَنَّ عَلٰي مَآ اٰذَيْتُمُوْنَا ۭ وَعَلَي اللّٰهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُوْنَ ۝١٢ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لِرُسُلِهِمْ لَنُخْرِجَنَّكُمْ مِّنْ اَرْضِنَآ اَوْ لَتَعُوْدُنَّ فِيْ مِلَّتِنَا ۭ فَاَوْحٰٓى اِلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ لَنُهْلِكَنَّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ۝١٣ وَلَنُسْكِنَنَّكُمُ الْاَرْضَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ ۭ ذٰلِكَ لِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامِيْ وَخَافَ وَعِيْدِ ۝١٤ وَاسْتَفْتَحُوْا وَ

7. And Moses said: "If you and all people of the earth are ungrateful, you will not in any way harm God. And He is self-sufficient and has all praiseworthy attributes."

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خَابَ كُلُّ جَبَّارٍ عَنِيْدٍ ﴿١٥﴾ مِّنْ وَّرَآىِٕهٖ جَهَنَّمُ وَ يُسْقٰى مِنْ مَّآءٍ صَدِيْدٍ ﴿١٦﴾ يَّتَجَرَّعُهٗ وَ لَا يَكَادُ يُسِيْغُهٗ وَ يَاْتِيْهِ الْمَوْتُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَّ مَا هُوَ بِمَيِّتٍ ؕ وَ مِنْ وَّرَآىِٕهٖ عَذَابٌ غَلِيْظٌ ﴿١٧﴾

Has not the news of those reached you who lived before you? The people of Noah, the ‘Ād, the Thamūd and those who were after them, who no one except God knows. Their messengers brought veritable signs to them; then they placed their hands on their mouths and said: “We reject the message with which you have been sent with and the thing you are inviting us to, we are in a perplexing doubt about it.” Their messengers said: “Do you have doubt about the God Who is the creator of the heavens and the earth? He is calling you in order to forgive your sins and to give you respite until an appointed time.” They answered: “You are a mortal like us. You want to stop us from the worship of what our forefathers have been worshipping. So, bring before us a manifest miracle.” Their messengers replied: “Indeed, we are but mortals like you; but God blesses whomsoever of His servants He chooses. And it is not in our authority to show you a miracle except with God’s permission. And the believers should only trust God. And why should we not trust God when He has guided us about these ways of ours? And we shall remain steadfast on the hurt you cause us and those who trust should trust God alone.” And the disbelievers said to their messengers: “We shall either banish you from our land come what may or you will have to ultimately return to our way.” Then their Lord revealed to them: “We shall destroy these unjust people and after them make you inhabit this land. This is for those who fear standing before Me and who fear My threat.” (9-14)

And they had wanted a decision and every tyrant and stubborn person ended up a loser. Hell is in front of him. And he will have blood pus to drink. He will try to sip it drop by drop and will not be able to swallow it. And death will be assailing him from all sides and he will not be able to die and another harsh punishment awaits him ahead. (15-17)

Explanation

اَلَمْ يَاْتِكُمْ نَبَؤُا الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ قَوْمِ نُوْحٍ وَّ عَادٍ وَّ ثَمُوْدَ ۛؕ وَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ ۛؕ لَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ ؕ جَآءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ فَرَدُّوْۤا اَيْدِيَهُمْ فِيْۤ اَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَ قَالُوْۤا اِنَّا كَفَرْنَا بِمَاۤ اُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهٖ وَ اِنَّا لَفِيْ شَكٍّ مِّمَّا تَدْعُوْنَنَاۤ اِلَيْهِ مُرِيْبٍ ﴿۹﴾[8]

The nations which lived earlier than the ones mentioned have not been named.

8. Has not the news of those reached you who lived before you? The people of Noah, the ‘Ād, the Thamūd and those who were after them, who no one except God knows. Their messengers brought veritable signs to them; then they placed their hands on their mouths and said: “We reject the message with which you have been sent with and the thing you are inviting us to, we are in a perplexing doubt about it.”

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There is no reliable mention of them in history too. Only God knows about them. In verse 78 of Sūrah al-Mu'min, it is stated: لَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْهُمْ مَّنْ قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ لَّمْ نَقْصُصْ عَلَيْكَ.[9]

The words فَرَدُّوْٓا اَيْدِيَهُمْ فِيْٓ اَفْوَاهِهِمْ imply that they tried to shut the mouths of their messengers. This is what happens when a person out of hate and anger tries to stop someone. The word رَدُّوْٓا here means جَعَلُوا and this is its customary usage.

قَالَتْ رُسُلُهُمْ اَفِي اللّٰهِ شَكٌّ فَاطِرِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ يَدْعُوْكُمْ لِيَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ ذُنُوْبِكُمْ وَيُؤَخِّرَكُمْ اِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ؕ قَالُوْٓا اِنْ اَنْتُمْ اِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا ؕ تُرِيْدُوْنَ اَنْ تَصُدُّوْنَا عَمَّا كَانَ يَعْبُدُ اٰبَآؤُنَا فَاْتُوْنَا بِسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿١٠﴾[10]

This question posed by the messengers is out of wonder. The verse implies that their addressees believed in God also attest that He is the creator of the heavens and the earth. The messengers contented that they are only calling them towards Him; so there is no doubt in Him. If they are stopping them from these deities, it is because there is no argument in favour them.

قَالَتْ لَهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ اِنْ نَّحْنُ اِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ وَلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَمُنُّ عَلٰى مَنْ يَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ ؕ وَمَا كَانَ لَنَآ اَنْ نَّاْتِيَكُمْ بِسُلْطٰنٍ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَعَلَى اللّٰهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿١١﴾ وَمَا لَنَآ اَلَّا نَتَوَكَّلَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ وَقَدْ هَدٰىنَا سُبُلَنَا ؕ وَلَنَصْبِرَنَّ عَلٰى مَآ اٰذَيْتُمُوْنَا ؕ وَعَلَى اللّٰهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾[11]

It has been explained elsewhere that the words "God blesses whomsoever of His servants" do not mean that whomsoever God wants, He makes him a prophet or a messenger. It actually means that He confers this position only on those who are worthy of it in accordance with His wisdom.

The sentence of the messengers "and the believers should only trust God" implies that they consign the demand of showing a miracle to God because only He has this authority. It is befitting for the believers to trust Him in such matters.

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9. And We sent forth other messengers before you; We have already related the accounts of some to you and there are some others whose accounts We have not related to you.

10. Their messengers said: "Do you have doubt about the God Who is the creator of the heavens and the earth? He is calling you in order to forgive your sins and to give you respite until an appointed time." They answered: "You are a mortal like us. You want to stop us from the worship of what our forefathers have been worshipping. So, bring before us a manifest miracle."

11. Their messengers replied: "Indeed, we are but mortals like you; but God blesses whomsoever of His servants He chooses. And it is not in our authority to show you a miracle except with God's permission. And the believers should only trust God. And why should we not trust God when He has guided us about these ways of ours? And we shall remain steadfast on the hurt you cause us and those who trust should trust God alone."

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The words "and why should we not trust God when He has guided us about these ways of ours?" is the reason for which messengers trust God: it is their faith that God will help and guide them through the hindrances and hardships they face for this cause. In fact, this demand of theirs is from among these very hindrances. The messengers trust God's support in this matter. Their duty is to show perseverance in this regard and trust God.

وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لِرُسُلِهِمْ لَنُخْرِجَنَّكُمْ مِّنْ اَرْضِنَآ اَوْ لَتَعُوْدُنَّ فِيْ مِلَّتِنَا ؕ فَاَوْحٰٓى اِلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ لَنُهْلِكَنَّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿۱۳﴾ وَ لَنُسْكِنَنَّكُمُ الْاَرْضَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ ؕ ذٰلِكَ لِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامِيْ وَخَافَ وَعِيْدِ ﴿۱۴﴾[12]

This phase has ensued in the life of every messenger that their people have warned them in the words stated in the verse. This was responded to by the glad tidings mentioned.

The words "you will have to ultimately return to our way" do not necessitate that a messenger remained a part of the *jāhiliyyah* ways of his nation. Even before being called to this position, God's messengers follow the religion ingrained in their nature. However, since in this previous life, their nation have no reason to show animosity to them, their nation thing that they are following their ways. Their blame-game and condemnation start when these messengers take up their mission after being regarded as deviants.

The last part of verse 14 warns the followers of a messenger and urges them to be steadfast. Since the glad tidings given include the followers of the messengers too, they are warned that they will only reap these blessings if they bravely face hardships and while fearing their enemies forget fearing God.

These verses also indicate the time of revelation of the *sūrah*. It is obvious that what is stated must have been said in the time when the Quraysh had oppressed the Prophet (sws) and the believers so much that they had no option but to migrate from their homeland.

وَاسْتَفْتَحُوْا وَخَابَ كُلُّ جَبَّارٍ عَنِيْدٍ ﴿۱۵﴾[13]

The believers repeatedly demanded from their messengers to bring the punishment they continuously threaten them with. However, because of their affection and concern, every messenger would pray of the guidance of their nation. Yet, everything has a limit. Thus the time also comes when the messengers also pray with these words:

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12. And the disbelievers said to their messengers: "We shall either banish you from our land come what may or you will have to ultimately return to our way." Then their Lord revealed to them: "We shall destroy these unjust people and after them make you inhabit this land. This is for those who fear standing before Me and who fear My threat."

13. And they had wanted a decision and every tyrant and stubborn person ended up a loser.

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رَبَّنَا افْتَحْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ قَوْمِنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَاَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْفٰتِحِيْنَ (۷: ۸۹)

Lord! Judge fairly between us and our nation. You are the best of judges. (7:89)

When a messenger prays with these words, God's verdict is immediately delivered and divine punishment breaks the backs of these disbelievers.

مِّنْ وَّرَآىِٕهٖ جَهَنَّمُ وَيُسْقٰى مِنْ مَّآءٍ صَدِيْدٍ ﴿۱۶﴾ يَّتَجَرَّعُهٗ وَلَا يَكَادُ يُسِيْغُهٗ وَيَاْتِيْهِ الْمَوْتُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَّمَا هُوَ بِمَيِّتٍ ؕ وَمِنْ وَّرَآىِٕهٖ عَذَابٌ غَلِيْظٌ ﴿۱۷﴾[14]

This verse describes the punishment these rebellious people will face in the hereafter.

Section IV: Verses (18-33)

This section mentions the details of the punishment the disbelievers and the rebellious will encounter in the next world. Leaders will curse their followers and the followers will curse their leaders. Even Satan will announce his acquittal from his followers. He will tell them to curse themselves if they have followed him and not curse him. On the other hand, the believers will be lodged comfortably in Paradise and will exchange greetings.

Readers may now proceed to study the verses.

Text and Translation

مَثَلُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِرَبِّهِمْ اَعْمَالُهُمْ كَرَمَادِ ِۨ اشْتَدَّتْ بِهِ الرِّيْحُ فِيْ يَوْمٍ عَاصِفٍ ؕ لَا يَقْدِرُوْنَ مِمَّا كَسَبُوْا عَلٰى شَيْءٍ ؕ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الضَّلٰلُ الْبَعِيْدُ ﴿۱۸﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ ؕ اِنْ يَّشَاْ يُذْهِبْكُمْ وَيَاْتِ بِخَلْقٍ جَدِيْدٍ ﴿۱۹﴾ وَّمَا ذٰلِكَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ بِعَزِيْزٍ ﴿۲۰﴾ وَبَرَزُوْا لِلّٰهِ جَمِيْعًا فَقَالَ الضُّعَفٰٓؤُا لِلَّذِيْنَ اسْتَكْبَرُوْٓا اِنَّا كُنَّا لَكُمْ تَبَعًا فَهَلْ اَنْتُمْ مُّغْنُوْنَ عَنَّا مِنْ عَذَابِ اللّٰهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ؕ قَالُوْا لَوْ هَدٰىنَا اللّٰهُ لَهَدَيْنٰكُمْ ؕ سَوَآءٌ عَلَيْنَآ اَجَزِعْنَآ اَمْ صَبَرْنَا مَا لَنَا مِنْ مَّحِيْصٍ ﴿۲۱﴾ وَقَالَ الشَّيْطٰنُ لَمَّا قُضِيَ الْاَمْرُ اِنَّ

14. Hell is in front of him. And he will have blood pus to drink. He will try to sip it drop by drop and will not be able to swallow it. And death will be assailing him from all sides and he will not be able to die and another harsh punishment awaits him ahead.

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اللّٰهَ وَعَدَكُمْ وَعْدَ الْحَقِّ وَ وَعَدْتُّكُمْ فَاَخْلَفْتُكُمْ ؕ وَ مَا كَانَ لِيَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ سُلْطٰنٍ اِلَّاۤ اَنْ دَعَوْتُكُمْ فَاسْتَجَبْتُمْ لِيْ ۚ فَلَا تَلُوْمُوْنِيْ وَ لُوْمُوْۤا اَنْفُسَكُمْ ؕ مَاۤ اَنَا بِمُصْرِخِكُمْ وَ مَاۤ اَنْتُمْ بِمُصْرِخِيَّ ؕ اِنِّيْ كَفَرْتُ بِمَاۤ اَشْرَكْتُمُوْنِ مِنْ قَبْلُ ؕ اِنَّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿۲۲﴾ وَ اُدْخِلَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَ عَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا بِاِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ ؕ تَحِيَّتُهُمْ فِيْهَا سَلٰمٌ ﴿۲۳﴾

And the example of the deeds of those who have disbelieved in their Lord is that of ashes on which a fierce wind blows on a stormy day. They would not be able to have any share from whatever they would have earned. This is a great deviation. Have you not reflected that God has created the heavens and the earth with a true purpose? If He wants, He can destroy you and bring forth a new creation. And this is not the slightest difficult for God. (18-20)

And everyone will come to God's presence. Then the weak will say to those who had posed to be of might: "We have remained obedient to you; so, can you lighten our burden from God's torment?" They will reply: "Had God guided us, we too would have shown you the way to guidance. It is now the same for us to cry out or to be patient; there is no way out for us." (21)

And when the matter would have been decided, Satan will say: "Indeed, God had made a true promise with you; and I had also promised you but I have gone back on my word. And I had no power over you; I only invited you and you accepted my invitation. So, do not blame me; blame yourselves. Neither can I help you in your pleading nor can you help me in my pleading. I have already denied that you had made me a partner of God." Indeed, there is a painful torment for people who are unjust to their souls. (22)

And those who professed faith and would have done righteous deeds shall be admitted to orchards below which rivers flow. They shall abide there forever with the directive of their Lord. And their greeting with one another therein shall be: "peace" to one another. (23)

Explanation

مَثَلُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِرَبِّهِمْ اَعْمَالُهُمْ كَرَمَادِ ِۨ اشْتَدَّتْ بِهِ الرِّيْحُ فِيْ يَوْمٍ عَاصِفٍ ؕ لَا يَقْدِرُوْنَ مِمَّا كَسَبُوْا عَلٰى شَيْءٍ ؕ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الضَّلٰلُ الْبَعِيْدُ ﴿۱۸﴾ [15]

The disbelievers here refer to the polytheists who are addressed here. Polytheism is in fact disbelief. Only monotheistic belief in God is acceptable in religion. If others

15. And the example of the deeds of those who have disbelieved in their Lord is that of ashes on which a fierce wind blows on a stormy day. They would not be able to have any share from whatever they would have earned. This is a great deviation.

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are associated with Him in His being, attributes and rights, then this belief is not acceptable. It is tantamount to His denial.

Through an example, this verse presents what will happen to the deeds of these polytheists on the Day of Judgement. These deeds obviously will be ones that they had done considering them to be virtuous.

The deviation referred to in this verse is the one from which they cannot come back to the right path. Readers may look up verse 3 of this *sūrah*. Another very profound example of such people is mentioned in verse 39 of Sūrah al-Nūr.

اَلَمۡ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالۡاَرۡضَ بِالۡحَقِّ ؕ اِنۡ يَّشَاۡ يُذۡهِبۡكُمۡ وَيَاۡتِ بِخَلۡقٍ جَدِيۡدٍ ﴿۱۹﴾ وَّمَا ذٰلِكَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ بِعَزِيۡزٍ ﴿۲۰﴾[16]

This verse has a threatening style while addressing the Quraysh. This world has been created with a purpose while their life is against this purpose. Why would then he let them continue to live and not destroy them. This is something very easy for God. Besides being affectionate and merciful, He is also one who establishes a system of justice. So why would it weigh down heavily on Him to destroy such people who themselves have destroyed the system of justice and fairness in every walk of life.

وَبَرَزُوۡا لِلّٰهِ جَمِيۡعًا فَقَالَ الضُّعَفٰٓؤُا لِلَّذِيۡنَ اسۡتَكۡبَرُوۡۤا اِنَّا كُنَّا لَكُمۡ تَبَعًا فَهَلۡ اَنۡتُمۡ مُّغۡنُوۡنَ عَنَّا مِنۡ عَذَابِ اللّٰهِ مِنۡ شَىۡءٍ ؕ قَالُوۡا لَوۡ هَدٰٮنَا اللّٰهُ لَهَدَيۡنٰكُمۡ ؕ سَوَآءٌ عَلَيۡنَاۤ اَجَزِعۡنَاۤ اَمۡ صَبَرۡنَا مَا لَنَا مِنۡ مَّحِيۡصٍ ﴿۲۱﴾[17]

The actual meaning of the word بروز is to come out from behind a barrier or shield. The eloquence in using this word is that a time will come when everyone who were using their deities as their shields will come out from behind them into the presence of God and no one will be able to help or support them at that time. Then the dialogue referred to in the verse will ensue

وَقَالَ الشَّيۡطٰنُ لَمَّا قُضِىَ الۡاَمۡرُ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ وَعَدَكُمۡ وَعۡدَ الۡحَـقِّ وَوَعَدتُّكُمۡ فَاَخۡلَفۡتُكُمۡ ؕ وَمَا كَانَ لِىَ عَلَيۡكُمۡ مِّنۡ سُلۡطٰنٍ اِلَّاۤ اَنۡ دَعَوۡتُكُمۡ فَاسۡتَجَبۡتُمۡ لِىۡ ۚ فَلَا تَلُوۡمُوۡنِىۡ وَلُوۡمُوۡۤا اَنۡفُسَكُمۡ ؕ مَاۤ اَنَا بِمُصۡرِخِكُمۡ وَمَاۤ اَنۡتُمۡ بِمُصۡرِخِىَّ ؕ اِنِّىۡ كَفَرۡتُ بِمَاۤ اَشۡرَكۡتُمُوۡنِ مِنۡ قَبۡلُ ؕ اِنَّ الظّٰلِمِيۡنَ لَهُمۡ عَذَابٌ اَلِيۡمٌ ﴿۲۲﴾[18]

16. Have you not reflected that God has created the heavens and the earth with a true purpose? If He wants, He can destroy you and bring forth a new creation. And this is not the slightest difficult for God.

17. And everyone will come to God's presence. Then the weak will say to those who had posed to be of might: "We have remained obedient to you; so, can you lighten our burden from God's torment?" They will reply: "Had God guided us, we too would have shown you the way to guidance. It is now the same for us to cry out or to be patient; there is no way out for us."

18. And when the matter would have been decided, Satan will say: "Indeed, God had made a

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This dialogue will ensue once the conversation between the leaders of disbelief and followers cited in the previous verse ends. The three points Satan will raise are:

i. God's promise as true whereas the promises he made were false.

ii. He had no power to force people to follow him and could only lure them if they acceded.

iii. He will acquit himself from them and say that there is no need to mutually curse one another; it is useless.

وَاُدْخِلَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا بِاِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ ۭ تَحِيَّتُهُمْ فِيْهَا سَلٰمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾[19]

This verse depicts the fate of the believers in the hereafter. They will greet one another with peace because they counseled one another in the right direction. As a result of this they landed in Paradise.

This conversation is in stark contrast with the mutually curses hurled upon one another by the disbelievers, as cited in the previous verses.

Section V: Verses (24-27)

In the previous verses, parables of deeds based on disbelief and polytheism were stated. In the succeeding verses, parables are cited of beliefs and ideologies based on polytheism and monotheism. The purpose is to make evident that polytheism has no basis – neither in human intellect and nature nor with God. Hence all deeds based on it will vanish in thin air. On the other hand, monotheism is based on human intellect and nature as well on God's guidance; it is deeply routed in the earth and its branches are vastly spread in the sky. For this reason, those who adhere to it will be granted success both in this world and in the next.

Readers may now proceed to study the verses.

Text and Translation

اَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ اَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَّ فَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاۗءِ ﴿٢٤﴾ تُؤْتِيْٓ

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true promise with you; and I had also promised you but I have gone back on my word. And I had no power over you; I only invited you and you accepted my invitation. So, do not blame me; blame yourselves. Neither can I help you in your pleading nor can you help me in my pleading. I have already denied that you had made me a partner of God." Indeed, there is a painful torment for people who are unjust to their souls.

19. And those who professed faith and would have done righteous deeds shall be admitted to orchards below which rivers flow. They shall abide there forever with the directive of their Lord. And their greeting with one another therein shall be: "peace" to one another.

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اُكُلَهَا كُلَّ حِيْنٍ بِاِذْنِ رَبِّهَا ؕ وَيَضْرِبُ اللّٰهُ الْاَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿۲۵﴾ وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيْثَةٍ
كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيْثَةِ ِاجْتُثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْاَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ ﴿۲۶﴾ يُثَبِّتُ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِى
الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِى الْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ وَيُضِلُّ اللّٰهُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ۙ وَيَفْعَلُ اللّٰهُ مَا يَشَآءُ ﴿۲۷﴾

Have you not reflected how God has mentioned the parable of the noble word? It is like a noble tree whose root is deep in the ground and whose branches are spread out in the air. It continues to bear its fruit with the directive of its Lord in every season. And God cites parables for people so that they are reminded. (24-25)

And the parable of the evil word is an evil tree that can be uprooted from above the ground; it has absolutely no stability. (26)

God shall strengthen the believers in this world and in the hereafter through this strong word, and shall not acknowledge the deeds of those who were unjust to their souls. And God does whatever He wants to. (27)

Explanation

اَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ اَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَّفَرْعُهَا فِى السَّمَآءِ ﴿۲۴﴾ تُؤْتِىْٓ اُكُلَهَا كُلَّ حِيْنٍ بِاِذْنِ
رَبِّهَا ؕ وَيَضْرِبُ اللّٰهُ الْاَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿۲۵﴾[20]

The address اَلَمْ تَرَ though is singular, yet is directed to many. It is as if every person of a group is addressed individually and asked to reflect on the parables subsequently cited.

The expression "noble word" refers to monotheism and the beliefs based on it.

The expression "noble tree" refers to a tree that bears fruit, provides shade and is useful and blessed.

In the sentence اَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَّفَرْعُهَا فِى السَّمَآءِ parallel clauses have been suppressed in accordance with linguistic principles. If the suppressed parts are revealed, the whole sentence would be: اَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ فِى الْاَرْضِ وَفَرْعُهَا عَالٍ فِى السَّمَآءِ. There are several examples of such suppression in the Qur'ān. It may noted that just as the word سماء means, it also connotes air and atmosphere. Since a tree obtains nourishment from both the earth and the sky, the words used are very apt.

By comparing the word "monotheism" to such a tree, the Qur'ān has firstly made evident the fact that its roots are not only deeply and firmly implanted in human nature but also it is the most highly-valued by God. In other words, the status it occupies in the heavens and earth is unparalleled.

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20. Have you not reflected how God has mentioned the parable of the noble word? It is like a noble tree whose root is deep in the ground and whose branches are spread out in the air. It continues to bear its fruit with the directive of its Lord in every season. And God cites parables for people so that they are reminded.

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The second reality that is explained is that it receives nourishment and strength from within human nature and from providence as well. This keeps it always lush and luxurious.

The third reality that is explained is that its blessings are abiding. Its benefits are everlasting. He who has this light in his heart will always remain prosperous and happy.

The words "and God cites parables for people so that they are reminded" address the Quraysh and remind them of God's favour bestowed on them in the form of parables. God wants to lift them to a lofty place but they want to remain sprawled in the pool of stagnation Satan has pushed them into. It may be kept in mind that since parables are symbolic in nature, they have a great impact. It is for this reason that prophets and proponents of the truth have used them a lot in their preaching. Alas! The naïve never listen to them.

وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ اجْتُثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ ﴿٢٦﴾[21]

The expression "evil word" refers to polytheism and beliefs based on it.

The "evil tree" is like wild foliage. It neither bears fruit nor flowers. No one can sit in its shade or obtain food from it. It is is like a thorn-laden, wild, foul-smelling and useless bush which will bruise the hands if touched, cause the tongue to contort if tasted and the reeking stink of which will totally disrupt the faculty of smell. It is like a wild bush which only exists on the earth surface. It does not have any roots in the earth nor is spread high in the sky. If a person wants to uproot it, he can easily do it from above.

This parable actually refers to polytheism. It is like a wild, thorny and stinking tree that has no benefit. It is easy to uproot since it neiteher has roots nor strong branches.

It is evident from this parable that polytheism has no basis either in human intellect and nature or in the religion revealed by God. It is like a self-growing thorny bush that gows where it finds space. If there is someone to uproot it, he can easily do so; however, if no one is there, it spreads all over.

Also found in this parable are glad tidings for the believers: the wild plants of polytheism that they find around them will soon be extracted from their place. God has created such individuals who will cleanse this earth from this filth.

يُثَبِّتُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ ۖ وَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ الظَّالِمِينَ ۚ وَيَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ ﴿٢٧﴾[22]

The "strong word" here refers to monotheism about which it has already been

21. And the parable of the evil word is an evil tree that can be uprooted from above the ground; it has absolutely no stability.

22. God shall strengthen the believers in this world and in the hereafter through this strong word, and shall not acknowledge the deeds of those who were unjust to their souls. And God does whatever He wants to.

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shown that it has a strong basis not only in human nature but also in the world at large.

In the expression وَيُضِلُّ اللّٰهُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ the word إضلال means to render efforts into nothing. Thus in verse 1 of Sūrah Muḥammad, it is stated: اَلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَصَدُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ اَضَلَّ اَعْمَالَهُمْ.[23] The words "unjust to their souls" refer to the polytheists because polytheism is the greatest injustice according to the Qur'ān.

The Almighty has the power to do whatever He intends. None can stop Him in implementing His will nor can intercession be of avail before Him. It may be kept in mind that that God's will and intention is always governed by His justice and wisdom.

Section VI: Verses (28-34)

In the succeeding verses, the Quraysh are explicitly warned that since they have led their people to the pit of destruction, their abode is Hell. After that, Muslims are given glad tidings of success and at the same time told what preparation they should make to achieve this goal.

Readers may study these verses in the light of this background.

اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلَى الَّذِيْنَ بَدَّلُوْا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ كُفْرًا وَّ اَحَلُّوْا قَوْمَهُمْ دَارَ الْبَوَارِ ﴿٢٨﴾ جَهَنَّمَ ۚ يَصْلَوْنَهَا ۭ وَبِئْسَ
الْقَرَارُ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَجَعَلُوْا لِلّٰهِ اَنْدَادًا لِّيُضِلُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِهٖ ۭ قُلْ تَمَتَّعُوْا فَاِنَّ مَصِيْرَكُمْ اِلَى النَّارِ ﴿٣٠﴾ قُلْ لِّعِبَادِيَ
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا يُقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُنْفِقُوْا مِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ سِرًّا وَّعَلَانِيَةً مِّنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَّا بَيْعٌ فِيْهِ وَلَا
خِلٰلٌ ﴿٣١﴾ اَللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ وَاَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاۗءِ مَاۗءً فَاَخْرَجَ بِهٖ مِنَ الثَّمَرٰتِ رِزْقًا لَّكُمْ ۚ
وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْفُلْكَ لِتَجْرِيَ فِي الْبَحْرِ بِاَمْرِهٖ ۚ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْاَنْهٰرَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ
دَاۗىِٕبَيْنِ ۚ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَاٰتٰىكُمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ مَا سَاَلْتُمُوْهُ ۭ وَاِنْ تَعُدُّوْا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ لَا تُحْصُوْهَا
ۭ اِنَّ الْاِنْسَانَ لَظَلُوْمٌ كَفَّارٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

Have you not seen those people who were guilty of disbelief in return to God's favour and led their nation to the abode of destruction – Hell? In which they shall enter it and what an evil abode it is! And they associated partners with God in order to lead people astray from His path. Say: Rejoice awhile! your abode ultimately is Hell. (28-30)

Tell my servants who have professed faith to adhere to the prayer and spend openly

[23]. God has brought to nothing all the deeds of those who committed disbelief and stopped others from His path.

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and secretly from what We have given them before that day arrives in which there wont be any trading and friendship will be of no avail. (31)

It is God Who created the heavens and the earth and sent down water from the sky. Then through it produced various fruits for your sustenance and put the ship to your service that it may sail in the sea at His behest. And He put the seas to your service too and the sun and the moon also; both move in the same manner. And the day and night also. And has given you from everything you asked for. And if you would like to count the favours of God, you will not be able to count them. Indeed, human beings are very unjust and very ungrateful. (32-34)

Explanation

اَلَمۡ تَرَ اِلَى الَّذِيۡنَ بَدَّلُوۡا نِعۡمَتَ اللّٰهِ كُفۡرًا وَّاَحَلُّوۡا قَوۡمَهُمۡ دَارَ الۡبَوَارِ ﴿۲۸﴾ جَهَنَّمَ ۚ يَصۡلَوۡنَهَا ؕ وَبِئۡسَ الۡقَرَارُ ﴿۲۹﴾ وَجَعَلُوۡا لِلّٰهِ اَنۡدَادًا لِّيُضِلُّوۡا عَنۡ سَبِيۡلِهٖ ؕ قُلۡ تَمَتَّعُوۡا فَاِنَّ مَصِيۡرَكُمۡ اِلَى النَّارِ ﴿۳۰﴾[24]

The style of address: اَلَمۡ تَرَ expresses amazement and grandeur. Here the context shows that that it expresses amazement and rebuke and is directed at the leaders of the Quraysh. It was they who had brought their people to the brink of the pit of disbelief and polytheism, as is mentioned ahead.

The verse also alludes to the great favours which the Quraysh received by God's grace and as a blessing of Abraham's supplication, as will be detailed out ahead. Because of being the custodians of the House of God, God granted them the leadership of all Arabia. He gave them the peace and stability of urban life. It replaced the discomfort of their nomadic life. He opened for them the treasures of His mercy and sustenance in a barren piece of land. Instead of valuing these favours, they became engrossed in polytheism. They invented many deities and diverted people from God to them. This attitude could not have lasted last long. It was a short respite that would soon end.

قُلۡ لِّعِبَادِىَ الَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا يُقِيۡمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُنۡفِقُوۡا مِمَّا رَزَقۡنٰهُمۡ سِرًّا وَّعَلَانِيَةً مِّنۡ قَبۡلِ اَنۡ يَّاۡتِىَ يَوۡمٌ لَّا بَيۡعٌ فِيۡهِ وَلَا خِلٰلٌ ﴿۳۱﴾[25]

The word خِلٰلٌ means friendship and brotherhood and the word is at times used for

24. Have you not seen those people who were guilty of disbelief in return to God's favour and led their nation to the abode of destruction – Hell? In which they shall enter it and what an evil abode it is! And they associated partners with God in order to lead people astray from His path. Say: Rejoice awhile! your abode ultimately is Hell.

25. Tell my servants who have professed faith to adhere to the prayer and spend openly and secretly from what We have given them before that day arrives in which there wont be any trading and friendship will be of no avail.

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both buying and selling. When things are bartered both parties are buyers and sellers at the same time.

After the Quraysh were warned in the previous verses, this verse addresses the Muslims. Spending secretly has been recommended as it encompasses it real spirit, which is sincerity. On the spending openly is a means of motivating others. Since spending secretly is mentioned first, it indicates that this type of spending has a higher status.

The words "before that day arrives in which there wont be any trading and friendship will be of no avail" express the real need of spending. It is not primarily needed for others. It is required for the salvation of those who spend. Only this spending will be of use in the hereafter.

If the words of the verse, its style and occasion are deeply deliberated upon, it gives glad tidings to the Muslims in their future. Also concealed here is the fact that the Quraysh have totally destroyed the objectives of what is entrusted to them as heirs of Abraham (sws). Believers now have a chance to prepared themselves for these objectives and to be worthy trustees.

اَللّٰهُ الَّذِیْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضَ وَ اَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَاَخْرَجَ بِهٖ مِنَ الثَّمَرٰتِ رِزْقًا لَّكُمْ ۚ وَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْفُلْكَ لِتَجْرِیَ فِی الْبَحْرِ بِاَمْرِهٖ ۚ وَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْاَنْهٰرَ ﴿۳۲﴾ وَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الشَّمْسَ وَ الْقَمَرَ دَآىِٕبَیْنِ ۚ وَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الَّیْلَ وَ النَّهَارَ ﴿۳۳﴾ وَ اٰتٰىكُمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ مَا سَاَلْتُمُوْهُ ؕ وَ اِنْ تَعُدُّوْا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ لَا تُحْصُوْهَا ؕ اِنَّ الْاِنْسَانَ لَظَلُوْمٌ كَفَّارٌ ﴿۳۴﴾[26]

These verses further explain what is discussed earlier: all favours were given to the idolaters by God but these unjust people ascribed them to their deities and began worshipping the latter. Things like rain, ships, sea, sun, moon, day and night all have been put to their service by the Almighty. These naïve people made some of them deities and the rest they regarded to be under control of other deities. They devoted themselves to these deities.

The word سَخَّرَ لَكُمُ means to put something into the service of someone. Thus the sky, the earth, the sun and the moon are all subject to God's directive. However, God, out of his mercy and affection, has put them into the service of human beings.

The word دَآىِٕبَیْنِ means "continuous." In other words, the sun and the moon are moving in the same way in the same direction in the same path with the punctuality of seconds. They serve human beings and not the slightest deviate from their path. Does

26. It is God Who created the heavens and the earth and sent down water from the sky. Then through it produced various fruits for your sustenance and put the ship to your service that it may sail in the sea at His behest. And He put the seas to your service too and the sun and the moon also; both move in the same manner. And the day and night also. And has given you from everything you asked for. And if you would like to count the favours of God, you will not be able to count them. Indeed, human beings are very unjust and very ungrateful.

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this make them deities or ones which are controlled by the powerful and knowledgeable ruler of this universe?

The words "and has given you from everything you asked for" address human beings in their capacity of being human beings. They imply that whatever their nature and physical form needs is provided to them by God in accordance with His wisdom and expediency. The complete correspondence between demand and supply is the greatest evidence that He Who created them also arranged for all their needs.

Though a general word "human beings" is used in "indeed, human beings are very unjust and very ungrateful" it refers to the idolaters which are being discussed since the previous verses. Since they are not worthy of being addressed because of their ill-ways, a general word is used. The word ظَلُوْمٌ means "someone who usurps rights." When a person indulges in polytheism, he not only usurps the right of God but also of his one soul. The word كَفَّارٌ means "ungrateful." He is a person who thanks someone other than the one from whom he has received favours.

Section VII: Verses (35-41)

The biggest argument cited by the Quraysh in favour of their polytheism was that they had inherited it from Abraham (sws), their grand forefather. The succeeding verses refute this claim. It is further explained that he had settled his progeny in a desolate and barren piece of land after he had migrated from a lush and green region. He did so in order that his descendents could build a centre of worship of the one and only God and while staying away from the filth of polytheism purely devote themselves to God. The sustenance and livelihood found in this barren land are the sole result of Abraham's (sws) supplications. However, the Quryash have ascribed all these favours to their deities and while leaving aside the one and only God are engaged in worshipping their idols and say that this precisely is the religion of Abraham.

Readers may now study these verses in the light of this discussion.

Text and Translation

وَ اِذْ قَالَ اِبْرٰهِيْمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هٰذَا الْبَلَدَ اٰمِنًا وَّ اجْنُبْنِيْ وَ بَنِيَّ اَنْ نَّعْبُدَ الْاَصْنَامَ ﴿۳۵﴾ رَبِّ اِنَّهُنَّ
اَضْلَلْنَ كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ ۚ فَمَنْ تَبِعَنِيْ فَاِنَّهٗ مِنِّيْ ۚ وَ مَنْ عَصَانِيْ فَاِنَّكَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿۳۶﴾ رَبَّنَآ اِنِّيْٓ
اَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِيْ بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِيْ زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ ۙ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ فَاجْعَلْ اَفْئِدَةً مِّنَ
النَّاسِ تَهْوِيْٓ اِلَيْهِمْ وَارْزُقْهُمْ مِّنَ الثَّمَرٰتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿۳۷﴾ رَبَّنَآ اِنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ مَا نُخْفِيْ وَ مَا نُعْلِنُ ؕ وَ

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مَا يَخْفٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَآءِ ﴿٣٨﴾ اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ وَهَبَ لِيْ عَلَى الْكِبَرِ اِسْمٰعِيْلَ
وَاِسْحٰقَ ؕ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ لَسَمِيْعُ الدُّعَآءِ ﴿٣٩﴾ رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِيْ مُقِيْمَ الصَّلٰوةِ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِيْ ۖ رَبَّنَا وَتَقَبَّلْ دُعَآءِ ﴿٤٠﴾
رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِيْ وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ يَوْمَ يَقُوْمُ الْحِسَابُ ﴿٤١﴾

And recall when Abraham prayed: "Lord! Make this land peaceful and protect me and my progeny from worshipping idols. Lord! These idols have led many people astray; so, he who follows me, is from me and he who disobeys me, then You are Forgiving and Ever-Merciful. O Our Lord! I have settled some of my progeny near your sacred House in a barren valley; O Our Lord! that they show diligence in the prayer. So, incline the hearts of people towards them and grant them the sustenance of fruits so that they may be grateful to You. Lord! You know what we conceal and what we reveal and there is nothing hidden from God, neither in the earth nor in the heavens. Gratitude be to God Who has blessed me with Ishmael and Isaac in old age. Indeed, my Lord listens to supplications. Lord! Make me one who is diligent in the prayer and from my progeny also. Lord! And accept my supplication. O Our Lord! Forgive me and my parents and the believers on the Day when accountability takes place. (35-41)

Explanation

وَاِذْ قَالَ اِبْرٰهِيْمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هٰذَا الْبَلَدَ اٰمِنًا وَّاجْنُبْنِيْ وَبَنِيَّ اَنْ نَّعْبُدَ الْاَصْنَامَ ﴿٣٥﴾ رَبِّ اِنَّهُنَّ اَضْلَلْنَ كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ
النَّاسِ ۚ فَمَنْ تَبِعَنِيْ فَاِنَّهٗ مِنِّيْ ۚ وَمَنْ عَصَانِيْ فَاِنَّكَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٣٦﴾[27]

This supplication was made by Abraham (sws) when he was settling Ishmael (sws) and his mother in Makkah. The first thing he pleaded for was peace since Makkah was devoid of it at that time. God accepted this request and even harming an animal in it was declared a sin, let alone human beings. Then because of the House of God, four months were declared as sacred. In these months, caravans would be able to traverse peacefully from one part to another. None could dare think of touching them. Moreover, since the Quraysh were the custodians of the House of God, they had the status of leaders in the whole of Arabia. Their caravans would travel to all parts of the country with complete security. They would be even provided guides by other tribes.

The second thing he requested in this supplication was to protect him and his progeny from the filth of idol worship. He has included himself too in this request which shows the extent of threat of polytheism. Such is its nature that a great number

27. And recall when Abraham prayed: "Lord! Make this land peaceful and protect me and my progeny from worshipping idols. Lord! These idols have led many people astray; so, he who follows me, is from me and he who disobeys me, then You are Forgiving and Ever-Merciful.

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of people have succumbed to it. An aspect of eloquence of Abraham's words too needs to be appreciated here: when the purpose is to express the profundity of influence of something, the nouns and pronouns used are ones that are used for living beings.

The literal meaning of the word بَنِیَّ is "sons." However, it is used keeping in view the dominant element. It actually refers to all of Abraham's (sws) progeny. Thus the word ذُرِّیَّة is used ahead which is commonly used for progeny.

Abraham's words "so, he who follows me, is from me and he who disobeys me, then You are Forgiving and Ever-Merciful" sound an acquittal to those among his progeny who had left his ways and had become incriminated with polytheism. He meant that the matter of such people is consigned to God. He will deal with them in the way they are worthy of. If they deserve mercy, they will get it.

It may be kept in mind that these words do not constitute any supplication from Abraham (sws) in favour of the polytheists. It is just to consign their matter to the forgiving and ever-merciful God, as just indicated.

رَبَّنَآ اِنِّیۡۤ اَسۡکَنۡتُ مِنۡ ذُرِّیَّتِیۡ بِوَادٍ غَیۡرِ ذِیۡ زَرۡعٍ عِنۡدَ بَیۡتِکَ الۡمُحَرَّمِ ۙ رَبَّنَا لِیُقِیۡمُوا الصَّلٰوۃَ فَاجۡعَلۡ اَفۡئِدَۃً مِّنَ النَّاسِ تَہۡوِیۡۤ اِلَیۡہِمۡ وَارۡزُقۡہُمۡ مِّنَ الثَّمَرٰتِ لَعَلَّہُمۡ یَشۡکُرُوۡنَ ﴿۳۷﴾[28]

One thing that is evident from this verse is that for monotheism and for the sake of worshipping God with all sincerity is something for which a person can forsake everything and this is only befitting for him too. So much so, if for this he has to live alone in a barren stretch of land, he should. However, he should never leave God and His worship.

The second thing that is evident from this verse is that the House of God is in reality a centre to offer the prayer. For this reason, its real custodians are those who diligently offer the prayer and not those who in spite of forsaking monotheism and the prayer lay a claim to it. Here Abraham (sws) has mentioned the prayer as the initial purpose of building the House of God. Later when he was asked to call people for its pilgrimage, it also became a centre for *ḥajj* and also of animal sacrifice to commemorate the sacrifice of Ishmael (sws). It may be kept in mind that the expression لِیُقِیۡمُوا الصَّلٰوۃَ does not mean to merely offer the prayer; included in it is to call people to the prayer and make arrangements for them to offer the prayer.

Here Abraham (sws) has supplicated for two things for his progeny with respect to the prayer and to the land of Makkah.

First, he prayed that God inclines people's hearts towards them. Such was effect of

28. O Our Lord! I have settled some of my progeny near your sacred House in a barren valley; O Our Lord! that they show diligence in the prayer. So, incline the hearts of people towards them and grant them the sustenance of fruits so that they may be grateful to You.

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this supplication that very soon the House of God became a centre of attraction for all Arabia and after the advent of Muḥammad (sws) of virtually all the world.

Second, since the land of Makkah was barren and desolate, he prayed that it be blessed with abundance in sustenance and food supplies. The result of this prayer was that very soon it became the centre of trade in all of Arabia. This has been explained in detailed under verse 126 of Sūrah al-Baqarah.

رَبَّنَآ اِنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ مَا نُخْفِيْ وَمَا نُعْلِنُ ۭ وَمَا يَخْفٰى عَلَي اللّٰهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاۗءِ ﴿۳۸﴾[29]

The eloquence of this sentence is beyond words. When a person supplicates before his Lord, he is faced with a great difficulty: he wants to say a few things but he is unable to express them; similarly, there are some things that are in the heart but he feels shy in expressing them because of some unknown reason. This sentence has included all such things because the knowledge of God extends to all that is hidden and all that is apparent.

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ وَهَبَ لِيْ عَلَي الْكِبَرِ اِسْمٰعِيْلَ وَاِسْحٰقَ ۭ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ لَسَمِيْعُ الدُّعَاۗءِ ﴿۳۹﴾[30]

Here, in order to strengthen his supplication, Abraham (sws) has cited God's previous favours on him. It implies that he hopes that just as God had granted him two sons in his old age, He will also accept this new request.

رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِيْ مُقِيْمَ الصَّلٰوةِ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِيْ ۣ رَبَّنَا وَتَقَبَّلْ دُعَاۗءِ ﴿۴۰﴾ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِيْ وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ يَوْمَ يَقُوْمُ الْحِسَابُ ﴿۴۱﴾[31]

Here, at the end, he has supplicated for his progeny to fully adhere to the purpose he had built that House of God: to be diligent in the prayer. The expression "from my progeny" aptly tells us that only one part of his progeny ie Ishmael (sws) was settled there.

At the very end, he has supplicated to God to forgive him, his parents and all the believers.

The Qur'ān has specified at a number of instances that since at the time of migration, Abraham (sws) had told his father – Āzar – that he will seek forgiveness from him before God, he continued to do so. He only stopped when later God told him to stop. It seems that the supplication cited in the verse under discussion was made

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29. Lord! You know what we conceal and what we reveal and there is nothing hidden from God, neither in the earth nor in the heavens.

30. Gratitude be to God Who has blessed me with Ishmael and Isaac in old age. Indeed, my Lord listens to supplications.

31. Lord! Make me one who is diligent in the prayer and from my progeny also. Lord! And accept my supplication. O Our Lord! Forgive me and my parents and the believers on the Day when accountability takes place.

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before he was stopped.

It may be noted that in this supplication the words رَبَّنَا or رَبِّ occur seven times. This apparently seems a repetition. Yet this is a feature of a supplication; in fact, it is essential. The real characteristic of a supplication is to show humility and to plead and beseech God. This make it essential that the attention of the one who is supplicated to is repeatedly asked for His attention. When a person supplicates to God by using the word رَبِّ he wants to include as recommendation for his supplication the favour of God he has experienced. And when a person supplicates to God by using the word رَبَّنَا he wants to include as a recommendation for his supplication the favour which all of God's creatures are witnessing.

Here once again, readers may refresh in their minds what has been stated earlier: this supplication has been narrated to the Quraysh so that they recall the reason for being settled in this barren stretch of land and what they are actually doing. Moreover, they should realize that it was a result of Abraham's supplication that they received all the favours in this land but they ascribed them to their alleged deities.

Section VIII: Verses (42-52)

These are the concluding verses of the *sūrah* in which the Prophet (sws) is assured and the disbelievers are threatened. The coherence in the discourse is very evident. Readers may proceed to study them.

Text and Translation

وَ لَا تَحۡسَبَنَّ اللّٰهَ غَافِلًا عَمَّا يَعۡمَلُ الظّٰلِمُوۡنَ ۬ؕ اِنَّمَا يُؤَخِّرُهُمۡ لِيَوۡمٍ تَشۡخَصُ فِيۡهِ الۡاَبۡصَارُ ۙ﴿۴۲﴾ مُهۡطِعِيۡنَ
مُقۡنِعِىۡ رُءُوۡسِهِمۡ لَا يَرۡتَدُّ اِلَيۡهِمۡ طَرۡفُهُمۡ ۚ وَ اَفۡـِٕدَتُهُمۡ هَوَآءٌ ﴿۴۳﴾ وَ اَنۡذِرِ النَّاسَ يَوۡمَ يَاۡتِيۡهِمُ الۡعَذَابُ فَيَقُوۡلُ
الَّذِيۡنَ ظَلَمُوۡا رَبَّنَاۤ اَخِّرۡنَاۤ اِلٰۤى اَجَلٍ قَرِيۡبٍ ۙ نُّجِبۡ دَعۡوَتَكَ وَ نَتَّبِعِ الرُّسُلَ ؕ اَوَ لَمۡ تَكُوۡنُوۡۤا اَقۡسَمۡتُمۡ مِّنۡ قَبۡلُ مَا
لَكُمۡ مِّنۡ زَوَالٍ ۙ﴿۴۴﴾ وَّ سَكَنۡتُمۡ فِىۡ مَسٰكِنِ الَّذِيۡنَ ظَلَمُوۡۤا اَنۡفُسَهُمۡ وَ تَبَيَّنَ لَكُمۡ كَيۡفَ فَعَلۡنَا بِهِمۡ وَ ضَرَبۡنَا لَكُمُ
الۡاَمۡثَالَ ﴿۴۵﴾ وَ قَدۡ مَكَرُوۡا مَكۡرَهُمۡ وَ عِنۡدَ اللّٰهِ مَكۡرُهُمۡ ؕ وَ اِنۡ كَانَ مَكۡرُهُمۡ لِتَزُوۡلَ مِنۡهُ الۡجِبَالُ ﴿۴۶﴾ فَلَا
تَحۡسَبَنَّ اللّٰهَ مُخۡلِفَ وَعۡدِهٖ رُسُلَهٗ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَزِيۡزٌ ذُو انۡتِقَامٍ ﴿۴۷﴾ يَوۡمَ تُبَدَّلُ الۡاَرۡضُ غَيۡرَ الۡاَرۡضِ وَ السَّمٰوٰتُ
وَ بَرَزُوۡا لِلّٰهِ الۡوَاحِدِ الۡقَهَّارِ ﴿۴۸﴾ وَ تَرَى الۡمُجۡرِمِيۡنَ يَوۡمَئِذٍ مُّقَرَّنِيۡنَ فِى الۡاَصۡفَادِ ﴿۴۹﴾ سَرَابِيۡلُهُمۡ مِّنۡ قَطِرَانٍ
وَّ تَغۡشٰى وُجُوۡهَهُمُ النَّارُ ۙ﴿۵۰﴾ لِيَجۡزِىَ اللّٰهُ كُلَّ نَفۡسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتۡ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَرِيۡعُ الۡحِسَابِ ﴿۵۱﴾ هٰذَا بَلٰغٌ

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لِّلنَّاسِ وَلِيُنْذَرُوْا بِهٖ وَلِيَعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّمَا هُوَ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ وَّلِيَذَّكَّرَ اُولُوا الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿۵۲﴾

And do not think that God is unaware of what these unjust people are doing. He is only deferring them to the day in which eyes will be bewildered. They will be running with their heads raised. Their gaze will not come back to them and their hearts will be trembling. (42-43)

And you warn these people of the day when the torment will overcome them. At that time, these people, who were unjust to their souls, will say: "Our Lord! Give us a little more respite; we shall accept your message and follow the messengers" – Have you not been swearing oaths before this that you are ones who will not give up [your stance]? And you lived in the cities of those people who were unjust to their souls and it was evident to you how We had dealt with them and We had also cited their examples for you. And they contrived every scheme they could. And these schemes of theirs are now lodged with God, even though such were their schemes that even mountains could be dislodged. (44-46)

So, never even think that God shall go back on His promises made with His messengers. God is dominant and revengeful. Remember the day when this earth will be replaced by another and the sky too and everyone will come forth before God, the One and Mighty. And on that day, you will see the wrongdoers fettered in chains; their attire will be of charcoal and fire will overspread their faces. This is so because God rewards each person what he earned. Indeed, God is swift in reckoning. This is a declaration for the people and so that they are informed through it and so that they know that only He is God and so that the wise receive a reminder. (47-52)

Explanation

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللّٰهَ غَافِلًا عَمَّا يَعْمَلُ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ ۙ اِنَّمَا يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ تَشْخَصُ فِيْهِ الْاَبْصَارُ ﴿۴۲﴾ مُهْطِعِيْنَ مُقْنِعِيْ رُءُوْسِهِمْ لَا يَرْتَدُّ اِلَيْهِمْ طَرْفُهُمْ ۚ وَاَفْـِٕدَتُهُمْ هَوَآءٌ ﴿۴۳﴾[32]

When the verb تَشْخَصُ is used for eyes it means that eyes become dazed and bewildered, though it actually means something high.

The verb إهطاع means to swiftly go towards something especially when this movement is done in fear.

The word إقناع means to raise one's head or to raise one's voice. Here it means to walk with head raised.

Though the verse apparently addresses the Prophet (sws), its intense anger is directed to the Quraysh. The Prophet (sws) is in fact assured.

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32. And do not think that God is unaware of what these unjust people are doing. He is only deferring them to the day in which eyes will be bewildered. They will be running with their heads raised. Their gaze will not come back to them and their hearts will be trembling.

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وَاَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ يَوْمَ يَاْتِيْهِمُ الْعَذَابُ فَيَقُوْلُ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا رَبَّنَآ اَخِّرْنَآ اِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ قَرِيْبٍ ۙ نُّجِبْ دَعْوَتَكَ وَنَتَّبِعِ الرُّسُلَ ؕ اَوَ لَمْ تَكُوْنُوْٓا اَقْسَمْتُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلُ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ زَوَالٍ ﴿۴۴﴾[33]

The verse implies that if these people do not listen to the Prophet (sws), he should let them be. What he should do is then pointed out by the verse.

وَّسَكَنْتُمْ فِيْ مَسٰكِنِ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ وَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمْ كَيْفَ فَعَلْنَا بِهِمْ وَضَرَبْنَا لَكُمُ الْاَمْثَالَ ﴿۴۵﴾[34]

The Quryash are told that they are well aware of the fate of the previous nations who had denied their messengers. They live and walk by their ruins and their exemplary anecdotes have also been narrated to them by God. These were not just told to them for entertainment. The purpose was to tell them that they too would face the same fate of they also denied their messenger. So why are they asking for further respite in the wake of all these happenings?

وَقَدْ مَكَرُوْا مَكْرَهُمْ وَعِنْدَ اللّٰهِ مَكْرُهُمْ ؕ وَاِنْ كَانَ مَكْرُهُمْ لِتَزُوْلَ مِنْهُ الْجِبَالُ ﴿۴۶﴾[35]

Ultimately, all the schemes of the previous nations were brought to nothing by God.

فَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللّٰهَ مُخْلِفَ وَعْدِهٖ رُسُلَهٗ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَزِيْزٌ ذُو انْتِقَامٍ ﴿۴۷﴾[36]

This verse addresses the Prophet (sws). The element of assurance in it is directed towards him and the rebuke found in it is directed at the disbelievers and the idolaters. Since God is dominant, none can stop Him from implementing His will and since He is capable of taking revenge, He will definitely lead the enemies of justice and truth reach their fate.

يَوْمَ تُبَدَّلُ الْاَرْضُ غَيْرَ الْاَرْضِ وَالسَّمٰوٰتُ وَبَرَزُوْا لِلّٰهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ ﴿۴۸﴾[37]

If linguistic considerations are kept in mind, the structure of the verse is: يَوْمَ السَّمٰوٰتِ

33. And you warn these people of the day when the torment will overcome them. At that time, these people, who were unjust to their souls, will say: "Our Lord! Give us a little more respite; we shall accept your message and follow the messengers" – Have you not been swearing oaths before this that you are ones who will not give up [your stance]?

34. And you lived in the cities of those people who were unjust to their souls and it was evident to you how We had dealt with them and We had also cited their examples for you.

35. And they contrived every scheme they could. And these schemes of theirs are now lodged with God, even though such were their schemes that even mountains could be dislodged.

36. So, never even think that God shall go back on His promises made with His messengers. God is dominant and revengeful.

37. Remember the day when this earth will be replaced by another and the sky too and everyone will come forth before God, the One and Mighty.

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تُبَدَّلُ الْاَرْضُ غَيْرَ الْاَرْضِ وَالسَّمٰوٰتُ غيرَ.

The word بَرَزُوْا means that on that day neither will there be anyone to help a person nor intercede for him. Each soul will be alone with his deeds. The heavens and the earth too will be different. No palaces or fortifications will exist there for their defence.

The word قَهَّار means someone who has sole control over everyone, who has absolutely no dependency on others and none has the power to escape His grasp.

وَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُّقَرَّنِيْنَ فِي الْاَصْفَادِ ﴿٤٩﴾ سَرَابِيْلُهُمْ مِّنْ قَطِرَانٍ وَّتَغْشٰى وُجُوْهَهُمُ النَّارُ ﴿٥٠﴾ لِيَجْزِيَ اللّٰهُ كُلَّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَرِيْعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٥١﴾[38]

The word سَرَابِيْلُ is plural of سِرْبَال and means both a shirt and an attire. Here, occasion evidences that it is used in the latter meaning.

Lexicographers have stated different meanings of the word قَطِرَان. However, it is commonly used for charcoal. In my opinion, it is used in this meaning. The blackness of the faces and bodies of those worthy of Hell is mentioned at other places in the Qur'ān as well. It is also known how fire ignites further on charcoal.

It will not take any time for God to take the account of people. It will happen in the blink of any eye.

هٰذَا بَلٰغٌ لِّلنَّاسِ وَلِيُنْذَرُوْا بِهٖ وَلِيَعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّمَا هُوَ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ وَّلِيَذَّكَّرَ اُولُوا الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿٥٢﴾[39]

This is the final warning issue to the Quraysh.

With these words, the explanation of this *sūrah* comes to its end.

وَآخِرُ دَعْوَاهُمْ أَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ (and our last prayer is that gratitude be to God, Lord of the world)

Lahore
12 September, 1970

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38. And on that day, you will see the wrongdoers fettered in chains; their attire will be of charcoal and fire will overspread their faces. This is so because God rewards each person what he earned. Indeed, God is swift in reckoning.

39. This is a declaration for the people and so that they are informed through it and so that they know that only He is God and so that the wise receive a reminder.

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Tadabbur i Qur'ān

15 Sūrah al-Ḥijr

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Sūrah al-Ḥijr

Theme

The warning given to the Quraysh and the assurance sounded to the Prophet (sws) at the end of the previous *sūrah* is dilated upon in this *sūrah.* The Prophet (sws) is addressed and told that the Qur'ān in itself is a solid proof. If people are not believing in it, calling him mad and demanding that unless angels descend on them they will not believe, then this is nothing new. In the past also, all those who denied their messengers adopted precisely this attitude. Even if they are shown the miracles they demand, they are not going to mend their ways. So, he should leave them to themselves. A time will come when they will regret not accepting the Qur'ān and his call.

Analysis of Meanings

Verses (1-15): The Prophet (sws) is assured that the Qur'ān is a proof in itself and does not need any external sign or miracle for its validation. Time will become when its rejecters will curse themselves for not accepting it. He should leave them to themselves and let them spend some days in this self-deception. A day has been fixed for the destruction of this nation. When this time expires, God's torment will visit it. If its people are demanding the appearance of angels, the Prophet (sws) should inform them that when angels do come, they implement God's verdict. After their arrival, nations are not given any respite. If these people are denying the Qur'ān, he should not worry. God will protect it Himself. When this attitude was adopted by previous nations, they met their fate. This nation too will not be an exception. The Prophet (sws) should also rest assured that the greatest of miracles will not be able to convince these people. If they see them, they will still have an excuse of rejection.

Verses (16-25): The addressees are reminded of the signs found in the world around them which validate the call of the Qur'ān. The sky and its dazzling stars, the earth and the diversity of its produce, the winds and the rain they send sound are portrayed. Why do these people not learn a lesson from them? Is there any need for a miracle after the manifestation of these signs?

Verses (26-48): The initial part of the incident of Adam's creation and the attitude adopted by Satan is depicted. The purpose is to delineate the real reason behind the

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disbelievers going astray. Another purpose was to remind the addressees of the ultimate fate of this disbelief to which they were lured by Satan and his progeny. Moreover, a passing reference is made of the success of the pious individuals who would be able to protect themselves from the lures of Satan.

Verses (49-77): The incident of the angels coming to Abraham (sws) shows that God is very merciful to His people and also avenges their sins. The very angels that came to Abraham (sws) with the glad tidings of a son were responsible to bring destruction upon the nation of Lot (sws). At the end, the disbelievers are directed to learn a lesson from the overturned settlements of Lot's nation which they pass by. They demand the arrival of angels from their messenger. However, when angels do come, they come in the manner they came to Lot's nation: after their arrival, God's punishment descends.

Verses (78-84): The fate of the nations of Shu'ayb (sws) and Ṣāliḥ (sws) is briefly alluded to. Like the nation of Lot (sws), the Quraysh would pass by the remains of these nations too in their trade journeys. The implication is that if they have a keen eye, the signs of the fate of the miscreants can be seen at every step. Is it then essential that their eyes open only when they see their own fate?

Verses (85-99): The Prophet (sws) is given assurance and told that he should gracefully ignore these people. They will soon meet their fate. The great treasure of the Qur'ān the Almighty has blessed him with is sufficient for him. In its presence, he needs nothing else. He should ignore the accusations of his addressees and involve himself in glorifying God and in the prayer. The truth will soon dawn upon everyone.

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Section I: Verses (1-15)

بِسۡمِ اللّٰہِ الرَّحۡمٰنِ الرَّحِیۡمِ

الٓرٰ ۟ تِلۡکَ اٰیٰتُ الۡکِتٰبِ وَ قُرۡاٰنٍ مُّبِیۡنٍ ﴿۱﴾ رُبَمَا یَوَدُّ الَّذِیۡنَ کَفَرُوۡا لَوۡ کَانُوۡا مُسۡلِمِیۡنَ ﴿۲﴾ ذَرۡہُمۡ یَاۡکُلُوۡا وَ
یَتَمَتَّعُوۡا وَ یُلۡہِہِمُ الۡاَمَلُ فَسَوۡفَ یَعۡلَمُوۡنَ ﴿۳﴾ وَ مَاۤ اَہۡلَکۡنَا مِنۡ قَرۡیَۃٍ اِلَّا وَ لَہَا کِتَابٌ مَّعۡلُوۡمٌ ﴿۴﴾ مَا
تَسۡبِقُ مِنۡ اُمَّۃٍ اَجَلَہَا وَ مَا یَسۡتَاۡخِرُوۡنَ ﴿۵﴾ وَ قَالُوۡا یٰۤاَیُّہَا الَّذِیۡ نُزِّلَ عَلَیۡہِ الذِّکۡرُ اِنَّکَ لَمَجۡنُوۡنٌ ﴿۶﴾ لَوۡ مَا
تَاۡتِیۡنَا بِالۡمَلٰٓئِکَۃِ اِنۡ کُنۡتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِیۡنَ ﴿۷﴾ مَا نُنَزِّلُ الۡمَلٰٓئِکَۃَ اِلَّا بِالۡحَقِّ وَ مَا کَانُوۡۤا اِذًا مُّنۡظَرِیۡنَ ﴿۸﴾
اِنَّا نَحۡنُ نَزَّلۡنَا الذِّکۡرَ وَ اِنَّا لَہٗ لَحٰفِظُوۡنَ ﴿۹﴾ وَ لَقَدۡ اَرۡسَلۡنَا مِنۡ قَبۡلِکَ فِیۡ شِیَعِ الۡاَوَّلِیۡنَ ﴿۱۰﴾ وَ مَا یَاۡتِیۡہِمۡ
مِّنۡ رَّسُوۡلٍ اِلَّا کَانُوۡا بِہٖ یَسۡتَہۡزِءُوۡنَ ﴿۱۱﴾ کَذٰلِکَ نَسۡلُکُہٗ فِیۡ قُلُوۡبِ الۡمُجۡرِمِیۡنَ ﴿۱۲﴾ لَا یُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ بِہٖ وَ قَدۡ
خَلَتۡ سُنَّۃُ الۡاَوَّلِیۡنَ ﴿۱۳﴾ وَ لَوۡ فَتَحۡنَا عَلَیۡہِمۡ بَابًا مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ فَظَلُّوۡا فِیۡہِ یَعۡرُجُوۡنَ ﴿۱۴﴾ لَقَالُوۡۤا اِنَّمَا سُکِّرَتۡ
اَبۡصَارُنَا بَلۡ نَحۡنُ قَوۡمٌ مَّسۡحُوۡرُوۡنَ ﴿۱۵﴾

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Ever-Merciful.

This is Alif Lām Rā. This is the Book of God and the verses of the lucid Qur'ān. The time will come when these people who have disbelieved will longingly wish that they had become Muslims. Leave them to eat and drink and make merry, and remain engrossed in desires. Soon they will know. Whichever nation We have destroyed, for them has been a writing prescribed. No nation exceeds its prescribed time or falls short of it. And they say: "O Person to whom this reminder has been revealed! You are a mad man. If you are truthful, why don't you bring forth angels to us?" We send down angels only with Our judgement and at that time they will not be given any respite. We Ourselves have sent down this reminder and only We are its guardians. And before you also, We sent Our messengers in earlier communities. So, they would make fun of every messenger who came to them. It is in this way that We make it enter the hearts of the wrongdoers. They will not profess faith in it. This has been the practice of their predecessors. And had We opened a door of the heavens to them which they could climb into, even then they would have said: "Our eyes have been dazed; in fact, a spell has been cast on all of us." (1-15)

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Explanation

الٓرٰ ۟ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ الْكِتٰبِ وَقُرْاٰنٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿١﴾[1]

The isolated letters (*ḥurūf muqaṭṭa'āt*) have been comprehensively discussed in the beginning of Sūrah al-Baqarah's exegesis. In my opinion الٓرٰ (Alif Lām Rā) is the Qur'ānic name of the *sūrah* and the demonstrative pronoun تِلْكَ (this) points towards it. The word الْكِتٰب (the Book) has also been discussed in the beginning of Sūrah al-Baqarah's exegesis. It refers to the Book of God which He had promised to reveal and whose arrival the previous prophets had informed their followers of. The expression قُرْاٰنٍ مُّبِيْنٍ has not been defined to allude to the grandeur and magnificence of the Qur'ān: the Qur'ān is proof to its own veracity; it does not need any external proof. Even then if people are not believing in it and demanding external miracles to verify it, then they are only calling for their own doom.

رُبَمَا يَوَدُّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَوْ كَانُوْا مُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿٢﴾[2]

This is the desire they will later have to protect themselves from the horrible consequences of not believing in this Book. Earlier, verse 44 of Sūrah Ibrāhīm also discussed this topic.

ذَرْهُمْ يَاْكُلُوْا وَيَتَمَتَّعُوْا وَيُلْهِهِمُ الْاَمَلُ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾[3]

The verse addresses the Prophet (sws).

وَمَآ اَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ اِلَّا وَلَهَا كِتَابٌ مَّعْلُوْمٌ ﴿٤﴾ مَا تَسْبِقُ مِنْ اُمَّةٍ اَجَلَهَا وَمَا يَسْتَاْخِرُوْنَ ﴿٥﴾[4]

This verse explains why the torment is not visiting them. This delay is based on an established practice of God according to which only after the truth is conclusively conveyed to a nation that it is punished. The extent of this communication required and the moral decadence after which a nation deserves punishment is known to God only. As soon as this time is reached, it is destroyed: neither is the time prescribed exceeded nor does it fall short.

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1. This is Alif Lām Rā. This is the Book of God and the verses of the lucid Qur'ān.
2. The time will come when these people who have disbelieved will longingly wish that they had become Muslims.
3. Leave them to eat and drink and make merry, and remain engrossed in desires. Soon they will know.
4. Whichever nation We have destroyed, for them has been a writing prescribed. No nation exceeds its prescribed time or falls short of it.

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وَقَالُوْا يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْ نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ اِنَّكَ لَمَجْنُوْنٌ ۝٦ لَوْ مَا تَاْتِيْنَا بِالْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ۝٧[5]

The implication of this poisonous statement is that if God is angry with them and happy with the Prophet (sws) and the followers, then why are they blessed with so many favours while the Prophet (sws) and his companions are deprived of them: this situation clearly shows to them that he is a person possessed who utters nonsense; his claim that an angel comes to him is also a flight of his fancy; if angels really came to him, why does he not bring these angels before them so that they can be observed; why is it that these creatures only come to him?

The expression لَوْمَا is used to arouse and stir the addressees. This usage is attested to by classical Arabic literature and by the Qur'ān itself too.

مَا نُنَزِّلُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَمَا كَانُوْٓا اِذًا مُّنْظَرِيْنَ ۝٨[6]

This verse responds to their above mentioned demand. The word حَق here means "decision." The implication of the verse is that God wants people to use their intellect and profess faith in the light of the signs found in the world around human beings and that within them towards which the Qur'ān is directing their attention; they should not demand angels to come to them if they have to profess faith. God sends angels only when people become blind and deaf and nothing except punishment becomes their fate. At that time, angels implement this decision of God and these people are wiped off; they are not given any respite.

اِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَاِنَّا لَهٗ لَحٰفِظُوْنَ ۝٩[7]

This verse sounds a profound and a powerful assurance to the Prophet (sws): if these Quraysh are not valuing this great scripture, he should not worry at all; this Book has been revealed by God not as a result of his desire and He Himself will protect it. If these people are rejecting it, he should leave them alone; God will create new recipients who will not withhold themselves from any sacrifice in order to call people towards it and in order to protect it. In verse 89 of Sūrah al-An'ām, it is thus stated: فَاِنْ يَّكْفُرْ بِهَا هٰٓؤُلَآءِ فَقَدْ وَكَّلْنَا بِهَا قَوْمًا لَّيْسُوْا بِهَا بِكٰفِرِيْنَ (if these people deny, do not be aggrieved; We will consign it to some others who will not deny). In other words, if these people accept this Book, it will be a source of their own good fortune in this world and the next, and if they call for the doom by rejecting it, others will come forward and accept it. Thus, when the Quraysh did not accept the Qur'ān, God

5. And they say: "O Person to whom this reminder has been revealed! You are a mad man. If you are truthful, why don't you bring forth angels to us?"

6. We send down angels only with Our judgement and at that time they will not be given any respite.

7. We Ourselves have sent down this reminder and only We are its guardians.

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inclined the hearts of the Anṣār towards it; they whole-heartedly accepted it and sacrificed everything to protect it.

The expression اِنَّا نَحۡنُ نَزَّلۡنَا has a double emphasis in it. It implies that when this Book has not been given to the Prophet (sws) at his demand, he does not have the responsibility to make people accept it. His responsibility is to only convey it to others. As far as keeping it intact and its protection is concerned, God will take care of it. The various ways in which God fulfilled this promise can be seen in history. This is not the place to delve into it.

وَلَقَدۡ اَرۡسَلۡنَا مِنۡ قَبۡلِكَ فِىۡ شِيَعِ الۡاَوَّلِيۡنَ ﴿۱۰﴾ وَمَا يَاۡتِيۡهِمۡ مِّنۡ رَّسُوۡلٍ اِلَّا كَانُوۡا بِهٖ يَسۡتَهۡزِءُوۡنَ ﴿۱۱﴾ كَذٰلِكَ نَسۡلُكُهٗ فِىۡ قُلُوۡبِ الۡمُجۡرِمِيۡنَ ﴿۱۲﴾ لَا يُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ بِهٖ وَقَدۡ خَلَتۡ سُنَّةُ الۡاَوَّلِيۡنَ ﴿۱۳﴾[8]

In order to further assure the Prophet (sws), these verses refer to the anecdotes of the earlier prophets. What he is experiencing today from his nation is nothing new; previous prophets too faced a similar response from their nations. Just as his nation is making fun of him, earlier prophets too were mocked by their nations. Such is the nature of the preaching of God's messengers that insolent wrongdoers cannot digest it easily. It pierces their hearts like an arrow and they want to evade it. Thus his own nation will also not accept it and follow the path of their predecessors and shall necessarily end up with the same fate too.

وَلَوۡ فَتَحۡنَا عَلَيۡهِمۡ بَابًا مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ فَظَلُّوۡا فِيۡهِ يَعۡرُجُوۡنَ ﴿۱۴﴾ لَقَالُوۡۤا اِنَّمَا سُكِّرَتۡ اَبۡصَارُنَا بَلۡ نَحۡنُ قَوۡمٌ مَّسۡحُوۡرُوۡنَ ﴿۱۵﴾[9]

In other words, the reason for their not accepting faith is not that a miracle is not being shown to them on their demand; the real reason is that they are not ready to give up their desires and because of arrogance are not ready to listen to the Prophet (sws).

Section II: Verses (16-25)

In the succeeding verses, attention is directed to the signs found in the world around human beings and that within them. They attest to the message being presented by the Prophet (sws). The reason for mentioning these signs is that in the presence of the miracles of nature, no new miracles are needed. If people have keen eyes and brains, every object of this universe can take them closer to God.

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8. And before you also, We sent Our messengers in earlier communities. So, they would make fun of every messenger who came to them. It is in this way that We make it enter the hearts of the wrongdoers. They will not profess faith in it. This has been the practice of their predecessors.

9. And had We opened a door of the heavens to them which they could climb into, even then they would have said: "Our eyes have been dazed; in fact, a spell has been cast on all of us."

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Text and Translation

وَلَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا فِي السَّمَآءِ بُرُوْجًا وَّزَيَّنّٰهَا لِلنّٰظِرِيْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَحَفِظْنٰهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْطٰنٍ رَّجِيْمٍ ﴿١٧﴾
اِلَّا مَنِ اسْتَرَقَ السَّمْعَ فَاَتْبَعَهٗ شِهَابٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿١٨﴾ وَالْاَرْضَ مَدَدْنٰهَا وَاَلْقَيْنَا فِيْهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَاَنْۢبَتْنَا فِيْهَا
مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَّوْزُوْنٍ ﴿١٩﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيْهَا مَعَايِشَ وَمَنْ لَّسْتُمْ لَهٗ بِرٰزِقِيْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَاِنْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ اِلَّا
عِنْدَنَا خَزَآئِنُهٗ ۫ وَمَا نُنَزِّلُهٗٓ اِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَّعْلُوْمٍ ﴿٢١﴾ وَاَرْسَلْنَا الرِّيٰحَ لَوَاقِحَ فَاَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً
فَاَسْقَيْنٰكُمُوْهُ ۚ وَمَآ اَنْتُمْ لَهٗ بِخٰزِنِيْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَاِنَّا لَنَحْنُ نُحْيٖ وَنُمِيْتُ وَنَحْنُ الْوٰرِثُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا
الْمُسْتَقْدِمِيْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا الْمُسْتَاْخِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ حَكِيْمٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢٥﴾

And We built strong forts in the sky and adorned it for people of insight and protected it from the interference of every accursed devil. If someone secretly tries to eavesdrop, a dazzling flame pursues it. (16-18)

And We spread out the earth and anchored mountains in it and made to grow all types of things in it in a proportion. And also placed in it the means for your sustenance, and also for the sustenance of those whom you do not provide. And there is nothing whose treasures are not with us. But We only send it down in a specific measure. (19-21)

And We make the winds to glide after making them water-laden. Then We send down water from the sky and enrich you with it. And it was not possible for you to have stored these quantities of it. (22)

And it is We Who give life and We Who give death and We are also the inheritors of everyone. And We know those too who were before you and those also who will come after you. And it is Your Lord indeed Who shall gather all these. Indeed He is Wise and All-Knowing. (23-25)

Explanation

وَلَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا فِي السَّمَآءِ بُرُوْجًا وَّزَيَّنّٰهَا لِلنّٰظِرِيْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَحَفِظْنٰهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْطٰنٍ رَّجِيْمٍ ﴿١٧﴾ اِلَّا مَنِ اسْتَرَقَ
السَّمْعَ فَاَتْبَعَهٗ شِهَابٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿١٨﴾[10]

The word برج means “fort.” Here it refers to the heavenly forts made by God. Angels are deputed in them. They guard the frontiers beyond which no evil creature is allowed to trespass. If some devil tries to eavesdrop, he is followed by a shooting star. The implication is that just as a sentinel deputed in the sign-post of a fort keeps an eye on the

10. And We built strong forts in the sky and adorned it for people of insight and protected it from the interference of every accursed devil. If someone secretly tries to eavesdrop, a dazzling flame pursues it.

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enemy and does not let a stranger pass by, in a similar way, angels deputed by God bombard these devils with shooting stars who try to intrude in this out-of-bound territory. In a secondary way, this verse also refutes the foundations of soothsaying and sorcery, which were rampant in pre-Qur'ānic times. By using these occult disciplines, the devils among the jinn would claim to have knowledge of the unknown and thereby tried to fool the simple masses. The Qur'ān has made it clear these devils cannot access the realm beyond this universe. If they try to do so they are bombarded with shooting stars. It is for this reason that an attribute of Satan is رَجِيْم (one who is stoned). The word كُل (every) shows that even the greatest of devils cannot enter this protected territory.

In whatever way science may interpret the phenomenon of shooting stars, it cannot negate the statement given about them by the Qur'ān. The reason is that science discusses the apparent reasons of a phenomenon. How God uses these stars is not the realm of science and only God can disclose it. Moreover, the only way to know about it is through divine revelation and the Qur'ān.

It may be noted that this topic is only brought up here secondarily, as pointed out earlier. The real objective of the verse under discussion is to direct attention to the signs of the heavens and the earth spread in every nook and corner of this universe: each of these signs is attesting to what the Qur'ān and the Prophet (sws) are informing people of. The implication being that for people who have the ability to think and analyze, the heavens and the earth are replete with signs; however, those who have shut their eyes and instead of learning from these signs demand miracles will continue to remain blind even if the greatest miracle is shown to them.

To gauge the coherence in the discourse, readers must concentrate on the expression: زَيَّنّٰهَا لِلنّٰظِرِيْنَ (adorned it for people of insight). It implies that for a person whose eyes are open there is no dearth of miracles around him. If he looks up at the heavens, he will see that God has adorned it with stars, planets, the sun, the moon, the redness of dawn, rainbows and so many other different and unique types of things. Wherever he looks, he is overcome with amazement and calls out in his heart that this creation cannot be without a purpose and cannot be a chance happening; it is created by a wise, knowledgeable and powerful being; the necessary consequence of His power and wisdom is that there must be a purpose of this creation: He must bring about a day in which He gather everyone, hold them accountable for their deeds and reward or punish them accordingly.

وَالْاَرْضَ مَدَدْنٰهَا وَاَلْقَيْنَا فِيْهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَاَنْۢبَتْنَا فِيْهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَّوْزُوْنٍ ﴿١٩﴾ [11]

After directing attention to signs of the heavens, now the signs of the earth are pointed out: just as the heavens are replete with the signs of God, the earth too is no less. The

11. And We spread out the earth and anchored mountains in it and made to grow all types of things in it in a proportion.

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lamp-studded heavens are stretched above and the earth is stretched out like the ground below with all its varieties of herbs and vegetation. God has anchored the mountains in it too which maintains its balance. Had this not been the case, it would have tilted away to one side with all life-forms in it, as is indicated at another instance in the Qur'ān.

The words "and made to grow all types of things in it in a proportion" point to the fact that it is because of this element of proportion that the earth became conducive for man to live comfortably and sustain himself. Otherwise, as is stated ahead, there is no scarcity in the resources of God. If He had allowed any of these things to exceed its required proportion, the whole system of this earth would have been destroyed and instead of human beings, some other creatures would have inhabited it or it would have remained completely uninhabited.

وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَعَايِشَ وَمَنْ لَّسْتُمْ لَهٗ بِرٰزِقِيْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾[12]

According to linguistic principles, the genitive particle in وَمَنْ لَّسْتُمْ لَهٗ بِرٰزِقِيْنَ has been suppressed from one place. Thus the expression مَنْ لَّسْتُمْ is actually لِمَنْ لَسْتُمْ.

After directing attention to the signs of the heavens and the earth, God has pointed to the comprehensive nature of His system of providence in this verse.

وَاِنْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ اِلَّا عِنْدَنَا خَزَآئِنُهٗ ۫ وَمَا نُنَزِّلُهٗٓ اِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَّعْلُوْمٍ ﴿٢١﴾[13]

This verse points to the poise and balance that is found everywhere in the universe and on which depends the sustenance of this world. Everything is available in its due proportion. If anything exceeds the limits of its quantity – and whenever it does so, it is at God's behest – great calamities happen on earth. All this shows that neither has this world been created by chance, as was considered by non-believers nor is it the product of different gods, as was believed by the idolaters. Thus in verse 2 of Sūrah al-Furqān, this proportion of the universe is called *taqdīr* and this *taqdīr* is presented there as an argument to refute polytheism and affirm monotheism. Insha'Allah, it will be dealt in detail there.

وَاَرْسَلْنَا الرِّيٰحَ لَوَاقِحَ فَاَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَاَسْقَيْنٰكُمُوْهُ ۚ وَمَآ اَنْتُمْ لَهٗ بِخٰزِنِيْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾[14]

The word لَقَحَ means "laden." From it is constructed the word لَاقِحَة whose plural is

12. And also placed in it the means for your sustenance, and also for the sustenance of those whom you do not provide.

13. And there is nothing whose treasures are not with us. But We only send it down in a specific measure.

14. And We make the winds to glide after making them water-laden. Then We send down water from the sky and enrich you with it. And it was not possible for you to have stored these quantities of it.

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لَوَاقِحَ.

The word الرِّيٰحَ refers to seasonal winds which cause the clouds to become water-laden and send down rain.

This verse is a further explanation of the system of providence God has pointed to earlier: water – which is the source of life for human beings and all other life forms as well as the means of various resources – is God-sent. It is He alone Who sends forth seasonal winds which gather clouds and make them produce rain. It was not possible for human beings to gather its reserves and dispense with them when needed. Only God could have done it and it is His mercy that He has made this arrangement for them.

وَاِنَّا لَنَحْنُ نُحْيٖ وَنُمِيْتُ وَنَحْنُ الْوٰرِثُوْنَ ﴿۲۳﴾[15]

This verse states the necessary outcome of what is said earlier: just as no one has any authority to give life and death, no one has any right in the inheritance of the inhabitants of the earth. God alone is the guardian and protector of all. If anyone has pinned hopes on someone else, it is mere conjecture which has no truth in it.

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا الْمُسْتَقْدِمِيْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا الْمُسْتَاْخِرِيْنَ ﴿۲۴﴾ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ حَكِيْمٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿۲۵﴾[16]

The verse dispels any misconception about the extent of God's power. The fact that He is wise entails that He will bring about a Day of Judgement and the fact that He is knowledgeable means that neither can anyone be beyond His observation nor can He be unaware of anyone's deeds.

Section III: Verses (26-48)

In the succeeding verses, the initial stages of the incident of creation of Adam and the attitude shown by Satan are referred to. The purpose is to clarify that the real reason of disbelief and haughtiness of people who are not professing faith today and arrogantly denying God's Messenger is not that they are not enough proofs to validate what he is calling them to or that miracles are not being shown to them on their demand; the actual reason is that they have been deceived by the progeny of Satan. He had threatened to lead people astray at the time he was asked to prostrate before Adam (sws). At that time, he had said that if he was given the opportunity, he would lead

15. And it is We Who give life and We Who give death and We are also the inheritors of everyone.

16. And We know those too who were before you and those also who will come after you. And it is Your Lord indeed Who shall gather all these. Indeed He is Wise and All-Knowing.

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astray all mankind; only sincere servants of God would not be led away by him. He was granted this opportunity by God Who told him to do whatever he wants to for His true servants would not be lured by him.

Text and Translation

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَاٍ مَّسْنُوْنٍ ﴿۲۶﴾ وَالْجَآنَّ خَلَقْنٰهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ مِنْ نَّارِ السَّمُوْمِ ﴿۲۷﴾ وَاِذْ
قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنِّيْ خَالِقٌۢ بَشَرًا مِّنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَاٍ مَّسْنُوْنٍ ﴿۲۸﴾ فَاِذَا سَوَّيْتُهٗ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيْهِ مِنْ رُّوْحِيْ فَقَعُوْا
لَهٗ سٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿۲۹﴾ فَسَجَدَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ اَجْمَعُوْنَ ﴿۳۰﴾ اِلَّآ اِبْلِيْسَ ؕ اَبٰٓى اَنْ يَّكُوْنَ مَعَ السّٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿۳۱﴾ قَالَ يٰٓاِبْلِيْسُ
مَا لَكَ اَلَّا تَكُوْنَ مَعَ السّٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿۳۲﴾ قَالَ لَمْ اَكُنْ لِّاَسْجُدَ لِبَشَرٍ خَلَقْتَهٗ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَاٍ مَّسْنُوْنٍ ﴿۳۳﴾ قَالَ
فَاخْرُجْ مِنْهَا فَاِنَّكَ رَجِيْمٌ ﴿۳۴﴾ وَّاِنَّ عَلَيْكَ اللَّعْنَةَ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ ﴿۳۵﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ فَاَنْظِرْنِيْٓ اِلٰى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُوْنَ ﴿۳۶﴾
قَالَ فَاِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِيْنَ ﴿۳۷﴾ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ الْمَعْلُوْمِ ﴿۳۸﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَآ اَغْوَيْتَنِيْ لَاُزَيِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَ
لَاُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿۳۹﴾ اِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ ﴿۴۰﴾ قَالَ هٰذَا صِرَاطٌ عَلَيَّ مُسْتَقِيْمٌ ﴿۴۱﴾ اِنَّ عِبَادِيْ لَيْسَ
لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنٌ اِلَّا مَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْغٰوِيْنَ ﴿۴۲﴾ وَاِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمَوْعِدُهُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿۴۳﴾ لَهَا سَبْعَةُ اَبْوَابٍ ؕ لِكُلِّ
بَابٍ مِّنْهُمْ جُزْءٌ مَّقْسُوْمٌ ﴿۴۴﴾ اِنَّ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ فِيْ جَنّٰتٍ وَّعُيُوْنٍ ﴿۴۵﴾ اُدْخُلُوْهَا بِسَلٰمٍ اٰمِنِيْنَ ﴿۴۶﴾ وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِيْ
صُدُوْرِهِمْ مِّنْ غِلٍّ اِخْوَانًا عَلٰى سُرُرٍ مُّتَقٰبِلِيْنَ ﴿۴۷﴾ لَا يَمَسُّهُمْ فِيْهَا نَصَبٌ وَّمَا هُمْ مِّنْهَا بِمُخْرَجِيْنَ ﴿۴۸﴾

And indeed it is We Who created human beings with mud which stinks and rings and before this created the jinn from the flame of fire. And recall when your Lord said to the angels: “I am creating a human being from mud which stinks and rings. So, when I complete it and blow My spirit into him, all of you prostrate for him.” Then all the angels prostrated before him except Iblīs. He refused to be with those who had prostrated. God asked: “Iblīs! What is your matter; you did not prostrate along with those who did?” He replied: “I am not one to prostrate before a human being who you have created from mud which stinks and rings.” God said: “If this is the case, then be off with you because you are accursed and accursed are you until the Day of Judgement.” He said: “Lord! Grant me respite until that day when people will be raised up.” God said: “Fine; you are also among those who have been given respite until that day appointed.” He said: “Lord! Since you have led me astray, in a similar way, I shall now also create temptations for them in the land and except from your chosen ones among your servants I shall definitely lead all others astray.” God said: “This is a straight path that leads to Me. You shall have absolutely no power over My servants except those who follow you from among those who have gone astray and for

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all of them is the promise of Hell. It has seven gates. For every gate, a special share has been allocated from them." Those who fear God will be amid orchards and fountains. "Abide in them with peace with no fear." We shall take away the malice in their hearts. They will sit on couches facing each other like brothers. They will neither feel tired there nor will they be expelled from there. (26-48)

Explanation

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَاٍ مَّسْنُوْنٍ ﴿۲۶﴾[17]

The word صَلْصَالٍ refers to mud that becomes dry and starts to ring.

The expression حَمَاٍ مَّسْنُوْنٍ refers to black and stinking mud.

All living beings originated from water and mud. Then for those of them about whom God willed that they remain on land, they were given land to dwell in and gave both them and the land the potentials and abilities they needed to live and grow in this environment. Human beings too passed through these stages. They also originated from water, mud and dry land. However, they have the distinction of being perfected with regard to their strengths and potentials that were essential for their purpose of creation. Here it needs to be noted that it is not just said that human beings were created from mud; it is further said that it was black stinking mud. The objective is to allude to the point of origin as well to the fact that it does not behoove a creature who was brought into existence from such a despicable ingredient to show arrogance before God Who created him from such a trivial ingredient and then gave him profound abilities.

وَالْجَآنَّ خَلَقْنٰهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ مِنْ نَّارِ السَّمُوْمِ ﴿۲۷﴾[18]

The word سَمُوْمٌ refers to the flames of fire and the scorching wind.

Here, it needs to be kept in mind that in these verses the purpose of the Qur'ān is not to disclose the substances of creation of human beings and the jinn. The real purpose is to point to the basis of the rivalry between them which is mentioned ahead. Iblīs who was among the jinn refused to prostrate before Adam (sws) because of his superior substance of creation as a result of which he was accursed and this became a permanent basis of his jealousy and rivalry with the progeny of Adam (sws).

وَاِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنِّيْ خَالِقٌۢ بَشَرًا مِّنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَاٍ مَّسْنُوْنٍ ﴿۲۸﴾ فَاِذَا سَوَّيْتُهٗ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيْهِ مِنْ رُّوْحِيْ فَقَعُوْا لَهٗ سٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿۲۹﴾[19]

17. And indeed it is We Who had created human beings with mud which stinks and rings.
18. And before this had created the jinn from the flame of fire.
19. And recall when your Lord had said to the angels: "I am creating a human being from

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From here begins the real subject for which the earlier verses formed a prelude. This incident of Adam (sws) and Iblīs has been discussed in detail in this exegesis under verses 22-38 of Sūrah al-Baqarah and verses 11-25 of Sūrah al-A'rāf. Repetition would only prolong the explanation here. However, I will allude to some important aspects which are essential to understand this series of verses.

One thing which is evident from these verses is that the directive given to the angels to prostrate before Adam (sws) was before he was created. The second thing which is evident is that the angels would be required to prostrate before him once he was perfected with regard to all his abilities and strengths and God's spirit was breathed into him. It is evident from this that the superiority human beings have is on the basis of these abilities and this divine spark. If they protect these abilities and potentials, he earns the prostration of the angels and if he wastes them, he is only an animal; in fact, even worse.

It is evident from the words فَقَعُوْا لَهٗ سٰجِدِيْنَ that human beings have a divine spark in them. It is this spark which is the fountainhead of all his spiritual advancements and it is on its basis that he gets connected with God provided he safeguards it. If he wastes it, he is like a house without light that has nothing but darkness in it.

فَسَجَدَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ اَجْمَعُوْنَ ﴿۳۰﴾ اِلَّآ اِبْلِيْسَ ؕ اَبٰٓى اَنْ يَّكُوْنَ مَعَ السّٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿۳۱﴾ [20]

All creatures including those who are subsumed in their category prostrated except Iblīs, who was from among the jinn. The reason he stated for this refusal, as is mentioned ahead, was that he was superior in creation since he was made from fire; how could he prostrate before someone made from clay and thus was inferior to him.

قَالَ يٰٓاِبْلِيْسُ مَا لَكَ اَلَّا تَكُوْنَ مَعَ السّٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿۳۲﴾ قَالَ لَمْ اَكُنْ لِّاَسْجُدَ لِبَشَرٍ خَلَقْتَهٗ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَاٍ مَّسْنُوْنٍ ﴿۳۳﴾ قَالَ فَاخْرُجْ مِنْهَا فَاِنَّكَ رَجِيْمٌ ﴿۳۴﴾ وَّاِنَّ عَلَيْكَ اللَّعْنَةَ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ ﴿۳۵﴾ [21]

This directive was obviously a test from God. The angels succeeded in it but Iblīs who was from among the jinn refused because of arrogance. Because of this rebelliousness he was accursed by God.

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mud which stinks and rings. So, when I complete it and blow My spirit into him, all of you prostrate before him."

20. Then all the angels prostrated before him except Iblīs. He refused to be with those who had prostrated. God asked: "Iblīs! What is your matter; you did not prostrate along with those who did?"

21. He replied: "I am not one to prostrate before a human being who you have created from mud which stinks and rings." God said: "If this is the case, then be off with you because you are accursed and accursed are you until the Day of Judgement."

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قَالَ رَبِّ فَاَنْظِرْنِيْٓ اِلٰى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ قَالَ فَاِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِيْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ الْمَعْلُوْمِ ﴿٣٨﴾[22]

Instead of feeling ashamed and realizing his folly, Iblīs became even more arrogant. God accepted the challenge these verses mention.

قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَآ اَغْوَيْتَنِيْ لَاُزَيِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَلَاُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ اِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾[23]

The word اِغْوَا means "leading astray." Since Iblīs regarded himself to be correct in not prostrating before Adam, he very insolently ascribed the word اِغْوَا to God. The implication was that if defying this directive made him a deviant from the truth, then this was no fault of his; the directive was such that he could not obey it. Hence his view was that if because of this he was led astray, it was God Who forced him to this.

The words لَاُزَيِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ فِي الْاَرْضِ imply that such will be potent way in which Iblīs will lure away human beings that they will be deeply engrossed in his temptations; they will not even remember their own status that earned them the prostration of the angels; they will become oblivious of the hereafter and move away from the belief of monotheism.

To understand the expression وَلَاُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ, consider verses 16-17 of Sūrah al-A'raf: قَالَ فَبِمَآ اَغْوَيْتَنِيْ لَاَقْعُدَنَّ لَهُمْ صِرَاطَكَ الْمُسْتَقِيْمَ ثُمَّ لَاٰتِيَنَّهُمْ مِّنْۢ بَيْنِ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ اَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَآئِلِهِمْ ؕ وَلَا تَجِدُ اَكْثَرَهُمْ شٰكِرِيْنَ (He replied: "Then because you have led me astray, I too shall lie in ambush at Your straight path. Then I shall certainly pounce upon them from their front and behind, from their right and left – from all sides. And You will find most of them to be ungrateful to You.") It is evident from this that the basic target of Satan is to lead people away from monotheism. All his mischief and conspiracies are for this purpose. He wants to lead away the progeny of Adam (sws) from the straight path that leads to God and make them entangled in polytheism.

The expression اِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ implies that only a few fortunate among mankind will be able to escape the lures of Satan.

قَالَ هٰذَا صِرَاطٌ عَلَيَّ مُسْتَقِيْمٌ ﴿٤١﴾[24]

The path of monotthesim – from which Satan threatened to lead away people – leads to God and is not crooked. It takes them straight Him and is free from any hindrances. It will automatically lead the servants of God to Him. It is only the wretched among them who would leave this straight path and adopt the crooked one.

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22. He said: "Lord! Grant me respite until that day when people will be raised up." God said: "Fine; you are also among those who have been given respite until that day appointed."

23. He said: "Lord! Since you have led me astray, in a similar way, I shall now also create temptations for them in the land and except from your chosen ones among your servants I shall definitely lead all others astray."

24. God said: "This is a straight path that leads to Me."

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In the expression هٰذَا صِرَاطٌ عَلَيَّ مُسْتَقِيْمٌ, the particle عَلٰى occurs here after صِرَاطٌ in accordance with a special linguistic style. It is evident from parallels in the Qur'ān and in classical Arabic that this style is adopted when the purpose is to say that so straight is this path that it inevitably leads those who tread it to their destination. Citing parallels from classical Arabic may prolong the discussion. For this reason, I present below some parallels from the Qur'ān itself.

In Sūrah Hūd, it is stated:

اِنِّيْ تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللّٰهِ رَبِّيْ وَ رَبِّكُمْ ؕ مَا مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ اِلَّا هُوَ اٰخِذٌۢ بِنَاصِيَتِهَا ؕ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ عَلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ (١١:٥٦)

I have put my trust in God, in my and your Lord. The forehead of every living being is in His hands. Indeed, my Lord is on the straight path. (11:56)

The last sentence above means adhereing to the straight path of monotheism is sufficient to reach God; no warped or twisted paths need to be traversed. In order to reach Him, it is enough if people tread the straight path, worship him zealously and trust Him that He will help them in every difficulty.

Similarly, in Sūrah al-Naḥl, it is stated:

وَعَلَى اللّٰهِ قَصْدُ السَّبِيْلِ وَمِنْهَا جَآئِرٌ ؕ وَلَوْ شَآءَ لَهَدٰىكُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ (١٦: ٩)

And the straight path reaches God, whereas there are some deviant paths. And had He wanted, He would have guided all of you. (16:9)

اِنَّ عِبَادِيْ لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنٌ اِلَّا مَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْغٰوِيْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾[25]

The word سُلْطٰنٌ means "authority."

وَاِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمَوْعِدُهُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ لَهَا سَبْعَةُ اَبْوَابٍ ؕ لِكُلِّ بَابٍ مِّنْهُمْ جُزْءٌ مَّقْسُوْمٌ ﴿٤٤﴾[26]

The verse states the fate of those who will follow Satan.

The stress here is on the word اَجْمَعِيْنَ. It is has been used by the Almighty in response to Satan's words لَاُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ. He had very arrogantly claimed that he would definitely lead everyone astray. To this, the Almighty's equal rejoinder is that He too will fill Hell with everyone come what may.

Such is the wide expanse of Hell that has been prepared for such wrongdoers that it will have seven gates. Through each gate will they enter separately with regard to

25. "You shall have absolutely no power over My servants except those who follow you from among those who have gone astray."

26. "And for all of them is the promise of Hell. It has seven gates. For every gate, a special share has been allocated from them."

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their crimes. By luring people into one or all of these wrongdoings, Satan tries to lead people to Hell.

If the coherence in the verses is given due regard, these verses mean no one should be under the misconception that how can such a vast expanse of Hell be available to punish so many people.

If the wrongdoings that lead a person to ruin are counted, it seems to me that they can be subsumed under seven principle categories referred to by the Qur'ān. They are :

1. Poytheism
2. Severing blood relations
3. Murder
4. Fornication
5. Perjury
6. Oppressing the weak
7. Rebellion

اِنَّ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ فِيْ جَنّٰتٍ وَّ عُيُوْنٍ ﴿۴۵﴾ اُدْخُلُوْهَا بِسَلٰمٍ اٰمِنِيْنَ ﴿۴۶﴾ وَ نَزَعْنَا مَا فِيْ صُدُوْرِهِمْ مِّنْ غِلٍّ اِخْوَانًا عَلٰى سُرُرٍ مُّتَقٰبِلِيْنَ ﴿۴۷﴾ لَا يَمَسُّهُمْ فِيْهَا نَصَبٌ وَّ مَا هُمْ مِّنْهَا بِمُخْرَجِيْنَ ﴿۴۸﴾[27]

After the fate of the dwellers of Hell has been mentioned in the previous verses, these verses refer to the fate of of those who are God-fearing and follow His directives. They will live in complete harmony. They do not have any malice for one another and if there ever is any bad taste because of a difference of opinion, it will go away once the truth becomes evident to them, and God will expunge its effects from their hearts.

If a person has the best comforts and luxuries of life but they do not have any variety in them, he will feel bored. In Paradise, its dwellers will not be faced with this situation. They will lead a life of eternal bliss and at every moment such will be the diversity and variety in God's favours that the dwellers of Paradise will never feel any boredom.

The last part of the last of the above verses gives glad tidings to them to abide in Paradise forever. If the best of a luxurious living is temporary, it takes away the joy from it. The dwellers of Paradise will be secure from this fear. They will forever live in this life of luxury and comfort.

27. Those who fear God will be amid orchards and fountains. "Abide in them with peace with no fear." We shall take away the malice in their hearts. They will sit on couches facing each other like brothers. They will neither feel tired there nor will they be expelled from there.

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Section IV: Verses (49-77)

In this section of verses, there first occurs a brief prelude in which it is explained that no one should be misconceived by the respite given to him by God. He is very gracious and merciful as well as powerful and revengeful. After that, the arrogant among the Quraysh – who were demanding from the Prophet (sws) to show them angels – are warned that they should not take this to be a simple matter. In order to explain this fact in the light of history, the anecdote of the people of Lot (sws) is narrated. The Quraysh used to pass by their settlements every now and then. The purpose of narrating this anecdote is to inform the Quraysh that if they desire to see angels, then they should also get ready to meet the fate of the people of Lot (sws).

Readers may now proceed to study the verses.

Text and Translation

نَبِّئْ عِبَادِيْٓ اَنِّيْٓ اَنَا الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَاَنَّ عَذَابِيْ هُوَ الْعَذَابُ الْاَلِيْمُ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَنَبِّئْهُمْ عَنْ ضَيْفِ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ
﴿٥١﴾ اِذْ دَخَلُوْا عَلَيْهِ فَقَالُوْا سَلٰمًا ؕ قَالَ اِنَّا مِنْكُمْ وَجِلُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ قَالُوْا لَا تَوْجَلْ اِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلٰمٍ عَلِيْمٍ ﴿٥٣﴾
قَالَ اَبَشَّرْتُمُوْنِيْ عَلٰٓى اَنْ مَّسَّنِيَ الْكِبَرُ فَبِمَ تُبَشِّرُوْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ قَالُوْا بَشَّرْنٰكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَلَا تَكُنْ مِّنَ الْقٰنِطِيْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾
قَالَ وَمَنْ يَّقْنَطُ مِنْ رَّحْمَةِ رَبِّهٖٓ اِلَّا الضَّآلُّوْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكُمْ اَيُّهَا الْمُرْسَلُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّآ اُرْسِلْنَآ اِلٰى
قَوْمٍ مُّجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ اِلَّآ اٰلَ لُوْطٍ ؕ اِنَّا لَمُنَجُّوْهُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ اِلَّا امْرَاَتَهٗ ؕ قَدَّرْنَآ ۙ اِنَّهَا لَمِنَ الْغٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾ فَلَمَّا
جَآءَ اٰلَ لُوْطِ ِۨ الْمُرْسَلُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ قَالَ اِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّنْكَرُوْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالُوْا بَلْ جِئْنٰكَ بِمَا كَانُوْا فِيْهِ يَمْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَ
اَتَيْنٰكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَاِنَّا لَصٰدِقُوْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾ فَاَسْرِ بِاَهْلِكَ بِقِطْعٍ مِّنَ الَّيْلِ وَاتَّبِعْ اَدْبَارَهُمْ وَلَا يَلْتَفِتْ مِنْكُمْ اَحَدٌ وَّ
امْضُوْا حَيْثُ تُؤْمَرُوْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ وَقَضَيْنَآ اِلَيْهِ ذٰلِكَ الْاَمْرَ اَنَّ دَابِرَ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ مَقْطُوْعٌ مُّصْبِحِيْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَجَآءَ اَهْلُ
الْمَدِيْنَةِ يَسْتَبْشِرُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ قَالَ اِنَّ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ ضَيْفِيْ فَلَا تَفْضَحُوْنِ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَلَا تُخْزُوْنِ ﴿٦٩﴾ قَالُوْٓا اَوَلَمْ
نَنْهَكَ عَنِ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ قَالَ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ بَنٰتِيْٓ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ فٰعِلِيْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ لَعَمْرُكَ اِنَّهُمْ لَفِيْ سَكْرَتِهِمْ يَعْمَهُوْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾
فَاَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ مُشْرِقِيْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾ فَجَعَلْنَا عَالِيَهَا سَافِلَهَا وَاَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً مِّنْ سِجِّيْلٍ ﴿٧٤﴾ اِنَّ
فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّلْمُتَوَسِّمِيْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَاِنَّهَا لَبِسَبِيْلٍ مُّقِيْمٍ ﴿٧٦﴾ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَاِنْ كَانَ
اَصْحٰبُ الْاَيْكَةِ لَظٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٧٨﴾ فَانْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ ۘ وَاِنَّهُمَا لَبِاِمَامٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٧٩﴾

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Inform My servants that indeed I am very Forgiving, Ever-Merciful. And indeed My torment is also a very painful one. And inform them about Abraham's guests as well. When they came to him, they said: "Peace be to you." He said: "We are scared of you." They said: "Fear not. We give glad tidings to you of a boy endowed with knowledge." He replied: "What, when I have been inflicted with old age you give these glad tidings to me; so, on what basis are you giving the glad tidings?" They said: "We have given you glad tidings of a certain event. So, be not among those who have no hope." He said: "Who except those who have gone astray can despair the mercy of their Lord." (49-56)

He asked: "O Messengers! What is your present task?" They replied: "We have been sent to a nation of wrongdoers. Only the people of Lot are an exception. We shall save all of them, except his wife. We have decided that she will be among those who will be left behind." (57-60)

Then when these messengers reached the people of Lot, he said: "You seem to be strangers." They replied: "We have come to you with that which they had been doubting. And we have come to you with a certain directive, and we are absolutely truthful. So, leave this place with your family within the night and walk behind them. And none of you should look back, and go where you are directed to go." And We informed him of this verdict of Ours that as soon as morning arrives, these people shall be routed. (61-66)

And the people of the city arrived with joy. He said: "These are my guests; so, do not humiliate me; fear God and do not disgrace me." They said: "Had we not stopped you from the coming of others?" He said: "If you are bent upon doing something, then here are my daughters." By your life! they have become blind because of their frenzy. So, at the strike of daybreak, Our shout overtook them and We ravaged that settlement and let loose on them a shower of clay stones. Indeed, there are great signs in this account for those who want to have insight. And this settlement is located at a common highway. Indeed, there is also in this anecdote a great sign for the believers. (67-77)

Explanation

نَبِّئْ عِبَادِيٓ أَنِّيٓ أَنَا الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَأَنَّ عَذَابِي هُوَ الْعَذَابُ الْأَلِيمُ ﴿٥٠﴾[28]

These verses explain the true concept of God's dealings: if He gives respite to both good and evil people, then one should not take this to mean that both are equal in His eyes. He is merciful and revengeful too. Those who tread His straight path are made to pass through various hardships to test their patience; however, it is these people who finally succeed. On the other hand, those who deviate from His path may be give some respite so that the truth is conclusively conveyed to them; however, ultimately

28. Inform My servants that indeed I am very Forgiving, Ever-Merciful. And indeed My torment is also a very painful one.

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they are punished for this deviation.

وَنَبِّئْهُمْ عَنْ ضَيْفِ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ ﴿٥١﴾ اِذْ دَخَلُوْا عَلَيْهِ فَقَالُوْا سَلٰمًا ؕ قَالَ اِنَّا مِنْكُمْ وَجِلُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ قَالُوْا لَا تَوْجَلْ اِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلٰمٍ عَلِيْمٍ ﴿٥٣﴾[29]

In order to substantiate what is stated in the previous verses, historical evidence is presented: the very angels who came to Abraham (sws) to give him glad tidings of a son endowed with knowledge brought the thunder of punishment to the people of Lot (sws).

The words of Abraham (sws) "we are scared of you" show that he knew well that when angels come openly in this way, they have some mission at hand. The people of Lot (sws) lived nearby and its moral deprivation had reached its ultimate extent. Abraham (sws) could have felt that perhaps they must be the target. The angels assured Abraham (sws) that he has nothing to worry about and they have actually come to give him glad tidings of a son endowed with knowledge. This meant that his son would actually be endowed with prophethood. Obviously, this increased the glad tidings manifold. The greatest desire Abraham (sws) could have had for his son would be that he be a prophet of God.

قَالَ اَبَشَّرْتُمُوْنِيْ عَلٰٓى اَنْ مَّسَّنِيَ الْكِبَرُ فَبِمَ تُبَشِّرُوْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾[30]

Abraham's (sws) jubilation on this news was obvious. But since his own old age made this prophesy look improbable, he wanted to have further assurance in this regard. The implication was that he wanted to know if these glad tidings were from God.

قَالُوْا بَشَّرْنٰكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَلَا تَكُنْ مِّنَ الْقٰنِطِيْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾[31]

The word حَقٌّ here means "a certain event."

The angels assured Abraham (sws) with these words and asked him to not worry about the apparent non conducive circumstances. Concealed in these words of the angels was that these glad tidings were from God. And anything which is from God is not dependent on circumstances in any way. This is because God has power over

29. And inform them about Abraham's guests as well. When they came to him, they said: "Peace be to you." He said: "We are scared of you." They said: "Fear not. We give glad tidings to you of a boy endowed with knowledge."

30. He replied: "What, when I have been inflicted with old age you give these glad tidings to me; so, on what basis are you giving the glad tidings?"

31. They said: "We have given you glad tidings of a certain event. So, be not among those who have no hope."

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everything.

قَالَ وَمَنْ يَّقْنَطُ مِنْ رَّحْمَةِ رَبِّهٖٓ اِلَّا الضَّآلُّوْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾[32]

When Abraham (sws) was convinced that these glad tidings were from God, he uttered these words spontaneously. They reflect the gratitude that he felt after being satisfied on these glad tidings. Also reflected in them was that the question he had posed to the angels was not because he had no hope in God's mercy; it was only because of the inconsistency of the apparent circumstances with these glad tidings. At the same time, he pointed out that those who lose hope in God's mercy in the hardest of circumstances are deprived of faith and go astray.

قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكُمْ اَيُّهَا الْمُرْسَلُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾[33]

The word خطب is mostly used for some important matter. Abraham (sws) was satisfied about his own self after he heard these glad tidings. However, the question did arise in his mind as to why did the angels come in the form of a group to merely give glad tidings; they must have some important task at hand. The moral degradation of the people of Lot (sws) who lived nearby had crossed all limits and Abraham (sws) was well aware of this. For this reason, he could have thought that perhaps the angels had come for Lot's nation. Hence he posed this question.

قَالُوْٓا اِنَّآ اُرْسِلْنَآ اِلٰى قَوْمٍ مُّجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ اِلَّآ اٰلَ لُوْطٍ ؕ اِنَّا لَمُنَجُّوْهُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ اِلَّا امْرَاَتَهٗ ۙ قَدَّرْنَآ ۙ اِنَّهَا لَمِنَ الْغٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾[34]

The style of this answer given by angels reflects two things.

Firstly, it shows their anger for the people of Lot (sws) as they did not name their targets; on the contrary, they said that they have been sent to wrongdoers. It shows that such was their hate for them that they did not even deem it appropriate to take their name.

Secondly, the decisive punishment of God visits a nation only when evil spreads to everyone. Such is the extent of its moral decadence that either no pious soul remains among them or if they do exist they lead a miserable life in the despicable circumstances.

Since the word اٰلَ also includes followers, it may well be that some people besides his family also accepted faith. The angels must have deemed it essential to specify this

32. He said: "Who except those who have gone astray can despair the mercy of their Lord."

33. He asked: "O Messengers! What is your present task?"

34. They replied: "We have been sent to a nation of wrongdoers. Only the people of Lot are an exception. We shall save all of them, except his wife. We have decided that she will be among those who will be left behind."

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before Abraham (sws) to allay his fears about Lot's family and followers. They told him that all of them will be saved except Lot's wife. It is evident from this exception that God's law is totally unbiased. Even a prophet's wife must face its consequences. In fact, if the true stress of the word قَدَّرْنَا is kept in mind, it would mean that if a person close to a prophet – whether man or woman – adheres to evil, God is angrier on him than others and that person deserves a harder accountability.

فَلَمَّا جَآءَ اٰلَ لُوْطِ ِالْمُرْسَلُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ قَالَ اِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّنْكَرُوْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾[35]

Lot (sws) knew that the angels did not belong to his land and hence expressed his wonder. He wanted them to introduce themselves to him.

قَالُوْا بَلْ جِئْنٰكَ بِمَا كَانُوْا فِيْهِ يَمْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَ اَتَيْنٰكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَ اِنَّا لَصٰدِقُوْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾[36]

Here the word حَقّ as has been used in the same sense as in verse 8: a certain punishment. After uttering these words, it was not necessary for the angels to clarify that they were not human beings. The words "we are absolutely truthful" are meant to admonish the Quraysh.

فَاَسْرِ بِاَهْلِكَ بِقِطْعٍ مِّنَ الَّيْلِ وَ اتَّبِعْ اَدْبَارَهُمْ وَ لَا يَلْتَفِتْ مِنْكُمْ اَحَدٌ وَّ امْضُوْا حَيْثُ تُؤْمَرُوْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾[37]

These are the directives which the angels gave Lot (sws) at this instance.

Firstly, he was told to leave the place within the night along with his family to where he was being directed to. The reason, as is referred to later, is that this place would be visited by a torment.

Secondly, he was told to walk behind them. This is like a shepherd walking behind his herd lest any sheep is separated from it and is consumed by a wolf.

Thirdly, after leaving that place, none of them should look back. If a person repeatedly turns around to look back at a place which he has left behind, it shows his attachment and fondness to it. In general circumstances, this attachment and fondness is normal and normal feelings cannot be stopped or brushed off. However, exiting the city to which the punishment of God is to be delivered once the truth has been conclusively conveyed to its inhabitants should be done in such a manner by the believers that no fondness remains in their hearts for it. It is thus mentioned in some

35. Then when these messengers reached the people of Lot, he said: "You seem to be strangers."

36. They replied: "We have come to you with that which they had been doubting. And we have come to you with a certain directive, and we are absolutely truthful.

37. So, leave this place with your family within the night and walk behind them. And none of you should look back, and go where you are directed to go."

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narratives that when he would quickly pass by the settlements of nations destroyed by God's punishment and would also ask his followers to do so.

وَقَضَيْنَآ اِلَيْهِ ذٰلِكَ الْاَمْرَ اَنَّ دَابِرَ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ مَقْطُوْعٌ مُّصْبِحِيْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾[38]

The preposition اِلٰی after قَضَيْنَا shows that a word of the meaning of اَبْلَغْنَا is understood to be present.

وَجَآءَ اَهْلُ الْمَدِيْنَةِ يَسْتَبْشِرُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾[39]

The city here refers to Soddom.

قَالَ اِنَّ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ ضَيْفِيْ فَلَا تَفْضَحُوْنِ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَلَا تُخْزُوْنِ ﴿٦٩﴾[40]

Lot (sws) uttered the above cited words feeling utterly humiliated. He also asked them to fear God. Such an appeal, if there is even the slightest moral sensitivity left in the addressees, proves to be very effective. This is because respect for guests is considered to be a noble virtue even among the vilest of people. However, nothing can be expected from those who are without this sensitivity.

قَالُوْٓا اَوَلَمْ نَنْهَكَ عَنِ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾[41]

Even the most ruffians of people find an excuse for their mischief. So these rogues too invented a justification and told Lot (sws) that he has connections with people living outside the city; they come to him and together they conspire against them; one day this will become a big threat against them. Thus they contended that they will not be deceived by him and his accomplices. They feared that one day they will bring some calamity upon them.

قَالَ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ بَنٰتِيْٓ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ فٰعِلِيْنَ ﴿٧١﴾[42]

I have explained under verse 78 of Sūrah Hūd that this was not an offer from Lot (sws). It was a last-ditch effort by him to shake and jolt the conscience of his people. Had they the slightest sensitivity to morality left in them, they would have thought that in order to save the honour of his guests, he was prepared to subject his own

38. And We informed him of this verdict of Ours that as soon as morning arrives, these people shall be routed.

39. And the people of the city arrived with joy.

40. He said: "These are my guests; so, do not humiliate me; fear God and do not disgrace me."

41. They said: "Had we not stopped you from the coming of others?"

42. He said: "If you are bent upon doing something, then here are my daughters."

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honour to danger. They should have also rebuked themselves at the offer for making such a sinister move of violating the honour of Lot's (sws) guests. This offer by him should be considered akin to how a person of high character and conduct is ready to put his own life and honour at stake to save the life and honour of another person.

لَعَمْرُكَ اِنَّهُمْ لَفِيْ سَكْرَتِهِمْ يَعْمَهُوْنَ ﴿۷۲﴾[43]

This is a very affectionate assurance sounded to Lot (sws). The implication of this verse is that now there is no chance of these people mending their ways and so the Prophet (sws) should not fret over them. God's torment will now decide their fate.

فَاَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ مُشْرِقِيْنَ ﴿۷۳﴾[44]

The word صَّيْحَة means "a shout." Here it refers to God's punishment that visited the people of Lot (sws) as soon as it was daybreak. The stormy wind was accompanied with the roar and glare of thunder and lightening. Hence, the word is very aptly used here.

فَجَعَلْنَا عَالِيَهَا سَافِلَهَا وَاَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً مِّنْ سِجِّيْلٍ ﴿۷۴﴾[45]

This verse rather concisely refers to the nature of punishment that came to them. My mentor, ustāz Ḥamīd al-Dīn Farāhī, has explained in detail its nature in his exegesis of Sūrah Dhāriyāt. Here is its relevant portion:

> The Almighty sent a sand-laden wind to the people of Lot (sws). These sand particles crystallized into clay stones. As a result, these clay stones were first hurled on them. Then this burst became so intense that overturned their houses. Thus while referring to them, it was stated: فَمِنْهُم مَّنْ أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِ حَاصِبًا (to some of these nations We sent stone-hurling winds, (29:40)). It was also stated جَعَلْنَا عَالِيَهَا سَافِلَهَا وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا حِجَارَةً مِّن سِجِّيلٍ مَّنضُودٍ (We overturned their city and let loose on them a shower of clay-stones, (11:82)). In other words, such was the nature of the tempestuous wind that all their houses and roofs were flattened to the ground and pebbles and sand covered them from above, as referred to by the words وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَةَ أَهْوَى فَغَشَّاهَا مَا غَشَّى (and the overturned cities that were overturned and then covered it with that which covered it, (53:53-54). (*Majmū'ah tafāsīr*, 129)

Research on the word سِجِّيْل is presented by him in his exegesis of Sūrah al-Fīl thus:

---

43. By your life! they have become blind because of their frenzy.
44. So, at the strike of daybreak, Our shout overtook them
45. And We ravaged that settlement and let loose on them a shower of clay stones.

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The word سِجِّيْل (*sijjīl*) is Arabicized form of two Persian words *sang* (stone) and *gil* (clay). The Qur'ān has explained it in two ways. At one instance (15:74), it is stated حِجَارَةً مِّن سِجِّيلٍ which means pebbles of the type of *sijjīl*. At another place (51:33), it is said: حِجَارَةً مِّن طِينٍ which means stones of clay. Since the word *sijjīl* had become part of the Arabic language, the Qur'ān has used it. (*Majmū'ah tafāsīr*, 368)

إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْمُتَوَسِّمِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَإِنَّهَا لَبِسَبِيلٍ مُّقِيمٍ ﴿٧٦﴾ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾[46]

The word تَوَسَّمَ means to minutely observe and learn a lesson from something exemplary.

The expression سَبِيلٍ مُّقِيمٍ means "a commonly trodden way."

After the anecdote of the people of Lot (sws), here first the disbelievers of the Quraysh are asked to learn a lesson from the settlements of the destroyed nations, if they really have eyes. They actually observe their remnants on the trade-routes they often pass by. It may be kept in mind that the settlements of Sodom and Gamorrah were situated on the trade routes of Ḥijāz and Syria. This route was a general passageway for the trade caravans of both countries.

After that, the attention of those who had professed faith in Muḥammad (sws) is directed to the fact that there is a great sign in this anecdote: though the righteous are put through trials but ultimately it is they who become worthy of God's mercy and their enemies are routed.

Section IV: Verses (78-99)

In the succeeding verses, the anecdotes of some other nations who denied their respective messengers and the fate they met are concisely referred to. After that, the Prophet (sws) is assured that he should continue to call people to the message of truth. If his nation also follows the footsteps of the previous nations, it will also meet a similar fate and he should not be disappointed at their behaviour; on the contrary, he should be gracefully patient. Ultimately, he and his companions will succeed.

Readers may proceed to study the verses.

Text and Translation

وَإِن كَانَ أَصْحَابُ الْأَيْكَةِ لَظَالِمِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾ فَانتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ ۖ وَإِنَّهُمَا لَبِإِمَامٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَ أَصْحَابُ

46. Indeed, there are great signs in this account for those who want to have insight. And this settlement is located at a common highway. Indeed, there is also in this anecdote a great sign for the believers.

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الْحِجْرِ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَ اٰتَيْنٰهُمْ اٰيٰتِنَا فَكَانُوْا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِيْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَ كَانُوْا يَنْحِتُوْنَ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوْتًا
اٰمِنِيْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَاَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ مُصْبِحِيْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ فَمَآ اَغْنٰى عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَ مَا خَلَقْنَا
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضَ وَ مَا بَيْنَهُمَآ اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ؕ وَ اِنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَاٰتِيَةٌ فَاصْفَحِ الصَّفْحَ الْجَمِيْلَ ﴿٨٥﴾ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ
الْخَلّٰقُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَ لَقَدْ اٰتَيْنٰكَ سَبْعًا مِّنَ الْمَثَانِيْ وَ الْقُرْاٰنَ الْعَظِيْمَ ﴿٨٧﴾ لَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ اِلٰى مَا مَتَّعْنَا
بِهٖۤ اَزْوَاجًا مِّنْهُمْ وَ لَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَ اخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾ وَ قُلْ اِنِّيْۤ اَنَا النَّذِيْرُ الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿٨٩﴾ كَمَآ
اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى الْمُقْتَسِمِيْنَ ﴿٩٠﴾ الَّذِيْنَ جَعَلُوا الْقُرْاٰنَ عِضِيْنَ ﴿٩١﴾ فَوَرَبِّكَ لَنَسْـَٔلَنَّهُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٩٢﴾ عَمَّا كَانُوْا
يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٩٣﴾ فَاصْدَعْ بِمَا تُؤْمَرُ وَ اَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿٩٤﴾ اِنَّا كَفَيْنٰكَ الْمُسْتَهْزِءِيْنَ ﴿٩٥﴾ الَّذِيْنَ
يَجْعَلُوْنَ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ ۚ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٩٦﴾ وَ لَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ اَنَّكَ يَضِيْقُ صَدْرُكَ بِمَا يَقُوْلُوْنَ ﴿٩٧﴾ فَسَبِّحْ
بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَ كُنْ مِّنَ السّٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَ اعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتّٰى يَاْتِيَكَ الْيَقِيْنُ ﴿٩٩﴾

And indeed the People of the Forest too were unjust to themselves. So, We took revenge from them as well and both of them are located on an open highway. And the people of Ḥijr also rejected the messengers. And We gave them Our signs but they always turned away from them. And they would carve houses from mountains with peace. Then right at daybreak Our shout seized them; so, whatever they had been earning could be of no benefit to them. (78-84)

And We have created the heavens and the earth and everything between them only with a purpose. And there is no doubt that the Day of Judgement is certain to come. So, forgive them gracefully. Surely, it is your Lord Who creates in abundance and has knowledge. We have given you the seven *mathānī* and the great Qur'ān. Do not even look up towards things which We have given their various groups and do not grieve at their situation. And lower your arms of affection on the believers and say: I am only an open warner. We had similarly revealed to those splitters who split their Qur'ān into pieces. So, by your Lord! We shall definitely ask all of them about the deeds have been doing. Hence openly read out the directive given to you, and ignore the Idolaters. We, on your behalf, are sufficient to deal with these people who make fun, who associate other deities with God. So, they shall soon come to know. And We know that your heart becomes tense on whatever they say. So, glorify your Lord while praising Him and be among those who prostrate and keep worshipping your Lord until the moment of certainty comes to you. (85-99)

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Explanation

وَاِنۡ كَانَ اَصۡحٰبُ الۡاَيۡكَةِ لَظٰلِمِيۡنَ ﴿۷۸﴾[47]

The expression اَصۡحٰبُ الۡاَيۡكَةِ refers to the people of Madyan to whom the prophet Shuy'ab (sws) was sent. The word اَيۡكَة is used for bush and for forest. There was a huge forest near this city. In Arabic, the word اَيۡكَة is used for bush and for forest. Here the attention of the Quraysh is being directed towards the earthly signs of destruction caused by divine punishment – signs they would see during their trade journeys.

The word ظٰلِمِيۡنَ refers to their disbelief and polytheism and deviation from the straight path. In the terminology of the Qur'ān, the greatest injustice is polytheism. Those who are guilty of this injustice deny the greatest right of God which is monotheism and are also very unjust to their own selves. Ultimately, they meet the same fate as the one prescribed by God for such people.

فَانۡتَقَمۡنَا مِنۡهُمۡ ۘ وَاِنَّهُمَا لَبِاِمَامٍ مُّبِيۡنٍ ﴿۷۹﴾[48]

The word إنتقام here means the punishment which manifested itself for them once the truth had been conclusively conveyed to these people. The dual pronoun in اِنَّهُمَا refers to settlement of the people of Shu'ayb (sws) and to that of the people of Lot (sws) which was mentioned earlier. The signs of both are very apparent and situated at an open highway. The Arabs (sws) used to pass by them frequently. The expression اِمَامٍ مُّبِيۡنٍ has the same meaning as that of سَبِيۡلٍ مُّقِيۡمٍ mentioned earlier in verse 76. It means an open path and common highway. Since paths are guides, hence the word اِمَامٍ is appropriately used for it.

وَلَقَدۡ كَذَّبَ اَصۡحٰبُ الۡحِجۡرِ الۡمُرۡسَلِيۡنَ ﴿۸۰﴾[49]

The area between northern Arabia and Syria is called Ḥijr. This place was inhabited by the people of Thamūd to whom prophet Ṣāliḥ (sws) was sent. It has been referred to earlier that the Quraysh are being reminded to the remnants of the nations destroyed by God. They used to frequently pass by them. It is in this connection that the three adjacent territories of the people of Lot (sws), Shu'ayb (sws) and Ṣaliḥ (sws) are mentioned one after the other.

Only one messenger was sent to the people of Ḥijr. However, they would have rejected any messenger as they did Ṣāliḥ (sws). It is because of this reason that the

47. And indeed the People of the Forest too were unjust to themselves.

48. So, We took revenge from them as well and both of them are located on an open highway.

49. And the people of Ḥijr also rejected the messengers.

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Qur'ān has used the word مُرْسَلِيْنَ in the plural. This shows the severity of their crime. The implication is that when they denied one messenger, it was as if they denied all.

وَاٰتَيْنٰهُمْ اٰيٰتِنَا فَكَانُوْا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِيْنَ ﴿٨١﴾[50]

The word اٰيٰتِ refers to intellectual and natural arguments as well as visual miracles. As far as the latter is concerned, the Qur'ān has mentioned the she-camel of the Thamūd. It may well be that other miracles too may have been shown to them, However, the Qur'ān has not mentioned them in detail and only insinuated towards them here. The reason for this is that here the objective is to point out that arguments and miracles will not be able to influence them.

وَكَانُوْا يَنْحِتُوْنَ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوْتًا اٰمِنِيْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾[51]

The implication of the verse is that they had no fear of their messenger's warnings and were fully engrossed in their construction fearts. They were highly skilled in carving houses from stones and rocks and they were very proud of this skill. In this situation, how could their hearts have been influenced by the warnings of the messengers and how could they have imagined that one day these beautiful houses could be turned into their graves.

فَاَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ مُصْبِحِيْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ فَمَآ اَغْنٰى عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾[52]

The punishment that visited these people is called الصَّيْحَةُ (shout) by the Qur'ān. The reason for this, as pointed out earlier, is that God sent layered clouds to the Thamūd. From within these clouds emerged deafening thunder and horrible lightning.

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَآ اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ؕ وَاِنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَاٰتِيَةٌ فَاصْفَحِ الصَّفْحَ الْجَمِيْلَ ﴿٨٥﴾[53]

From here onwards, the Prophet (sws) is directly addressed and these remaining verses constitute the end of the *sūrah*. All the topics discussed in it are encompassed in these verses. It is said that that the Almighty has created this world with wisdom and purpose. The essential consequence of this is that it should reach its fate and the

50. And We gave them Our signs but they always turned away from them.

51. And they would carve houses from mountains with peace.

52. Then right at daybreak Our shout seized them; so, whatever they had been earning could be of no benefit to them.

53. And We have created the heavens and the earth and everything between them only with a purpose. And there is no doubt that the Day of Judgement is certain to come. So, forgive them gracefully.

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court of God should deliver its verdict regarding whatever has happened in it. This is not a place of amusement for children so that people can do anything they want and not be questioned.

Thus the Day of Judgement is certain to come.These people who are exerting their utmost effort to oppose the Prophet (sws) will meet their fate. He should gracefully forgive them. This means that he should neither lose hope because of their mischief nor respond to their stupid talk. Furthermore, he should also not give up his responsibility of preaching. In fact, he should keep doing his work and leave their matter to God. If they do not mend their ways, they will end up with the same fate as the one met by their predecessor nations who denied their respective messengers.

اِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ الْخَلّٰقُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿۸۶﴾[54]

Earlier it was said that the Day of Judgement was about to come. Here its reasoning is mentioned: if God is the creator, then how can it be difficult for Him to create again whenever He wants to. If this second creation is for accountability, then there is no difficulty in this since He is also all-knowing. Nothing in the heavens and the earth is hidden from Him. When He decides to call them to accountability, He will reveal everything before them.

وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنٰكَ سَبْعًا مِّنَ الْمَثَانِيْ وَالْقُرْاٰنَ الْعَظِيْمَ ﴿۸۷﴾[55]

After reassuring the Prophet (sws) and urging him to show patience, here that great treasure is referred to which is a means of comfort for him in all hardships and a guarantor of his success. The implication is that in the presence of these seven *mathānī* which is like a spiritual army for him, he does not need any other weapon to combat his enemies. The God Who has imposed on him the responsibility of communicating this Qur'ān has promised to make him succeed. In verse 85 of Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ, it is stated: اِنَّ الَّذِيْ فَرَضَ عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْاٰنَ لَرَآدُّكَ اِلٰى مَعَادٍ.[56]

Here a question arises: what is the seven *mathānī*? Our earliest exegetes give various answers to this:

One opinion is that it refers to the initial seven long *sūrahs* of the Qur'ān.

Another opinion is that it refers to Sūrah al-Fatiḥah which has seven verses if the *bismillah* verse is also counted and this *sūrah* is repeatedly read in the prayer.

According to a third opinion, it refers to the complete Qur'ān.

There are other opinions too. However, only these are worthy of mention. Among

54. Surely, it is your Lord Who creates in abundance and has knowledge.

55. We have given you the seven *mathānī* and the great Qur'ān.

56. Indeed, He Who has imposed the responsibility of the Qur'ān on you will definitely make you reach a good fate.

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these three too, the second is the most famous. I have not been able to find any argument in favour of the first opinion. The sole argument in favour of the second opinion has been cited earlier. Though it cannot be denied that Sūrah al-Fatiḥah is repeatedly read in the prayers, I am not able to digest it for two reasons:

Firstly, Sūrah al-Fatiḥah can only be considered to have seven verses if the *bismillah* verse is also included in the count. There is difference of opinion whether this verse is part of the *sūrah* or not. The stronger view in this regard is that this verse is written at the beginning of this *sūrah* as it is written at the beginning of others. There seems no palpable reason to regard it to be a part of this *sūrah.*

Secondly, the meaning of "repeatedly saying something" can only be incorporated in the expression سَبْعًا مِّنَ الْمَثَانِيْ when the word الْمَثَانِيْ (*al-mathānī*) has this connotation. Now مَثَانِيْ is the plural of مَثْنَىٰ and does not have this meaning. It means something which occurs in pairs. This word occurs at many instances in the Qur'ān and it has this meaning at all these instances. For example:

وَاِنْ خِفْتُمْ اَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتٰمٰى فَانْكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنٰى وَثُلٰثَ وَرُبٰعَ (: ٣)

And if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, marry [their mothers] who are lawful to you, two two, three three, four four. (4:3)

قُلْ اِنَّمَآ اَعِظُكُمْ بِوَاحِدَةٍ ۚ اَنْ تَقُوْمُوْا لِلّٰهِ مَثْنٰى وَفُرَادٰى ثُمَّ تَتَفَكَّرُوْا (: ٤٦)

Tell them: "I counsel you about one thing: stand up in pairs or single for the sake of God; then reflect. (34:46)

Though the third opinion is not famous, but it is the most appropriate if the arguments behind it are kept in mind.

The greatest argument in its favour is that at one instance the Qur'ān itself says that it is مَّثَانِيَ:

اَللّٰهُ نَزَّلَ اَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيْثِ كِتٰبًا مُّتَشَابِهًا مَّثَانِيَ (: ٢٣)

God has revealed the best of scriptures in the form of a *mutashābihaṇ* mathānī book. (39:23)

The word مُّتَشَابِهًا means that all its contents are in harmony with one another and not in contradiction or at variance with one another. It refers to the occurrence of the Qur'ānic *sūrahs* in pairs. Among the larger *sūrahs*, Sūrah al-Baqarah and Sūrah Āl-i 'Imrān and among the shorter ones, Sūrah al-Falaq and Sūrah al-Nās are prominent. I have pointed out other paired-*sūrahs* as well throughout this exegesis.

I have explained in the foreword of this exegesis that the *sūrahs* are arranged in the

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form of seven chapters. Every chapter starts with one or more Makkan *sūrahs* and ends on one or more Madīnan *sūrahs*. Within each chapter, these *sūrahs* are like sections. In these chapters and sections, topics are common and each of them has its own distinctive feature as well. Sūrah al-Fātiḥah is a pre-amble to the whole Qur'ān. It concisely encompasses the content which is mentioned in detail in the rest of the Qur'ān.

In the light of this, the correct interpretation of the verse under discussion is: "I have given you seven *mathānī* which is the Qur'ān. In the Arabic expression سَبْعًا مِّنَ الْمَثَانِيْ, the مِّنَ is for annexure and in وَالْقُرْاٰنَ الْعَظِيْمَ the و is for explication. In other words, the Prophet (sws) is being told that these seven chapters are God's armies meant to affirm the truth and refute evil in the ultimate sense.

There are some narratives that say the Prophet (sws) regarded Sūrah al-Fātiḥah as the seven *mathānī* and the glorious Qur'ān. This has a specific background and connotation: it has been referred to earlier that Sūrah al-Fātiḥah is like a preamble to the whole Qur'ān and it concisely encompasses the content which is mentioned in detail in the rest of the Qur'ān. In other words, this gem has all the brilliance of the complete Qur'ān. Hence, it is with this respect that it is the seven *mathānī* and the glorious Qur'ān.

لَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ اِلٰى مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهٖۤ اَزْوَاجًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَاخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿۸۸﴾[57]

The word اَزْوَاج also means "groups." Thus, for example in verse 7 of Sūrah al-Wāqi'ah, it is said: وَّكُنْتُمْ اَزْوَاجًا ثَلٰثَةً (and you will be divided into three groups).

The verse implies that when God has given the Prophet (sws) the treasure of the Qur'ān which is a sufficient guarantor of his success, he should not even look at people who are inebriated in the arrogance of their material gains and are not prepared to listen and to understand him.

It should be kept in mind that if prophets of God first address the rich and wealthy of their society, it is not because they accord wealth and assets any importance or have greed for them; the reason for this is that if these people of wealth and power accept faith, they will succeed in the hereafter and their wealth and influence will strengthen the cause of religion and also open up the way of their subordinates to religion. It is for this reason that Prophet Muḥammad (sws) too addressed the leaders of the Quraysh in the initial period. However, when they did not listen to him, God directed him to focus all his attention to the believers who may not have the riches of this world but have the treasure of faith in the Qur'ān.

It is evident from the words "do not grieve at their situation" that the Prophet (sws) was very sorrowful at rejection of faith of these people. God even stopped him from

57. Do not even look up towards things which We have given their various groups and do not grieve at their situation. And lower your arms of affection on the believers.

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expressing grief on this deprivation because these wretched people deserve to be denied the treasure of the Qur'ān.

The words "and lower your arms of affection on the believers" subtly signify that very soon these wretched people will face the wrath of God. So just as a bird when sensing danger wraps its wings around its broods, in a similar way, the Prophet too should hide his people under the wings of his affection.

وَقُلْ اِنِّيْٓ اَنَا النَّذِيْرُ الْمُبِيْنُ ۚ﴿۸۹﴾[58]

The Prophet (sws) is asked to follow what this verse states. Whether they listen to him or not is not his responsibility.

كَمَآ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى الْمُقْتَسِمِيْنَ ۙ﴿۹۰﴾ الَّذِيْنَ جَعَلُوا الْقُرْاٰنَ عِضِيْنَ ﴿۹۱﴾[59]

This verse is connected to verse 87. The whole sense would be something like this: "We have given you the seven *mathānī* and the great Qur'ān the way We had similarly revealed to those splitters who split their Qur'ān into pieces." This is a reference to the Jews who, in order to conceal the truth, changed the arrangement of their own Qur'ān which is the Torah. They had divided it into various parts and would conceal some of them and reveal some others. Verse 96 of Sūrah al-An'ām mentions this prank. An example of calling other scriptures as the Qur'ān is found in verse 31 of Sūrah al-Ra'd.

This verse also secondarily answers this question of the Jews as to why a new Qur'ān was need after the Torah. The answer was that in the first place that Qur'ān never existed in its original shape – the one they had great pride in. They had split it into parts. Moreover, had it existed in its original form, they would have also known the need of the new Qur'ān.

The word عِضِيْنَ is the plural of عضة. It means "groups", "parts" and "categories."

فَوَرَبِّكَ لَنَسْـَٔلَنَّهُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ۙ﴿۹۲﴾ عَمَّا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿۹۳﴾[60]

Both these verses relate to the Jews as well. Their sin of concealing the truth will be gravely punished.

فَاصْدَعْ بِمَا تُؤْمَرُ وَاَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿۹۴﴾[61]

From here, the discourse re-connects to its original topic and addresses the Prophet

58. And say: I am only an open warner.
59. We had similarly revealed to those splitters who split their Qur'ān into pieces.
60. So, by your Lord! We shall definitely ask all of them about the deeds have been doing.
61. Hence openly read out the directive given to you, and ignore the Idolaters.

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(sws).

اِنَّا كَفَيْنٰكَ الْمُسْتَهْزِءِيْنَ ﴿٩٥﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يَجْعَلُوْنَ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ ۚ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٩٦﴾ [62]

The verse implies that God is sufficient to take account from these people who make fun of his warnings.

وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ اَنَّكَ يَضِيْقُ صَدْرُكَ بِمَا يَقُوْلُوْنَ ﴿٩٧﴾ فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَكُنْ مِّنَ السّٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتّٰى يَاْتِيَكَ الْيَقِيْنُ ﴿٩٩﴾ [63]

These verses urge the Prophet (sws) to be patient in the wake of the sarcasm and mockery of the disbelievers.

With these words, the explanation of this *sūrah* comes to an end. May God forgive my blemishes and benefit the readers from what is correctly stated here.

وَآخِرُ دَعْوَاهُمْ أَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (and our last prayer is that gratitude be to God, Lord of the world)

---

62. We, on your behalf, are sufficient to deal with these people who make fun, who associate other deities with God. So, they shall soon come to know.

63. And We know that your heart becomes tense on whatever they say. So, glorify your Lord while praising Him and be among those who prostrate and keep worshipping your Lord until the moment of certainty comes to you.

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Tadabbur i Qur'ān

16 Sūrah al-Naḥl

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Sūrah al-Naḥl

Theme and Relationship with the Previous Sūrah

I have comprehensively discussed the themes of all the *sūrahs* of this chapter at the beginning of the Sūrah Yunus' exegesis. The conflict between truth and falsehood that ensues with the advent of a messenger necessarily culminates in his victory and that of his followers and in the defeat of his rejecters. It is this reality which in fact has been made evident in this *sūrah* in a new style. Viewed thus, verse 30 of this *sūrah* reflects its theme: لِلَّذِيْنَ اَحْسَنُوْا فِيْ هٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ ؕ وَلَدَارُ الْاٰخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ ؕ وَلَنِعْمَ دَارُ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ (those who adopted good, for them there is good in this world also and the abode of the Hereafter is much better than this and how marvellous is the abode of those who fear God). Verses 41-42 also state precisely the same fact: those who migrate for the cause of truth while suffering from the oppression of their opponents are granted political authority in this world and in the hereafter their reward is much more.

The previous *sūrah* – al-Ḥijr – ended on a note of assurance for the Prophet (sws). He was told that he should not be upset at people who were making fun of his warnings and admonitions and regarding them to be baseless; God is sufficient to take these arrogant people to task on his behalf. With this background, the current *sūrah* starts off without any prelude with the words: اَتٰٓى اَمْرُ اللّٰهِ فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُوْهُ ؕ سُبْحٰنَهٗ وَ تَعٰلٰى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ (The directive of God has been pronounced. So, do not seek to hasten it. He is pure and exalted from the things they associate with Him.

Analysis of Meanings

Verses (1-9): The disbelievers of the Quraysh are warned that they should know that God's torment is just about to arrive. They should not try to hasten its arrival by regarding it to be a joke. They should not arrogantly think that the partners they associate with God would save them. He has no partners. This world is not the playground of children so that people can spread whatever disorder they want to and not be held accountable by its creator and master. It is not befitting for a human being created from a drop of water to dispute with God about his recreation. The signs of God's providence that are present in this world everywhere show that He is very merciful and compassionate. He will necessarily bring about a day in which He will decide all matters and reward or punish people according to their deeds. Thus the correct attitude for people is to adopt the straight path delineated by Him and avoid treading on deviant paths. Had God wanted, He would have guided everyone to the

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straight path but He did not deem coercion the right thing in this regard. He wants people to choose the right path from their own will.

Verses (10-23): The harmony in conflicting elements of nature in this universe bears evidence to the belief of monotheism. This harmony shows that the same powerful intention governs the whole universe. No one else has a share in it. Thus people who rely on other deities and have no fear of the hereafter will one day necessarily bear the consequences of this arrogance.

Verses (24-32): The attitude of the arrogant towards the Qur'ān and its teachings is alluded to. It is explicitly stated that inebriated with their leadership, those who are trying to disillusion people from the Qur'ān will bear the burden of their deviance as well as a part of others because they were responsible for them going astray. In contrast to this, the attitude of the righteous is cited and their good fate is alluded to.

Verses (33-40): Some of the arguments the idolaters proffered to oppose the Qur'ān and support their baseless views are cited and refuted.

Verses (41-47): Those who were putting up with hardships from the idolaters merely for the cause of truth are encouraged and the polytheists are warned at their arrogance.

Verses (48-60): Arguments in favour of monotheism are cited and the idolaters are admonished that everything is in God's control. If He seizes them, no one can save them. He can seize them in every state they are in.

Verses (61-64): The idolaters are warned that if God has given them respite, it is because there is time fixed for every event. When that time arrives, neither will there be any delay nor will anything happen before its arrival. Simultaneously, the Prophet (sws) is assured that whatever he is facing is the same as previous messengers faced. His task is not to convert people into believers; he is only required to conclusively communicate the truth to them.

Verses (65-83): By recounting certain favours of God before the idolaters, they are rebuked: to whom can they attribute them except God. After that, the Prophet (sws) is assured that it is not his responsibility to show the way to those who are deliberately posing as if they know nothing. His only responsibility is to communicate the truth.

Verses (84-90): God has sent messengers to every community to convey the truth to it. He will ask them to bear witness on the Day of Judgement if they delivered His message. Prophet Muḥammad (sws) occupies the same status for this community. It is for this objective that God revealed a Book to him. After that, the basic message of this Book is briefly referred to.

Verses (91-95): The Jews are addressed and rebuked that after entering into a covenant with God they have become His rivals because of jealousy. They are like an old women who spins her thread and then shreds it into bits. They too are similarly shredding the covenant made with God. They should not sell this covenant for the wealth of this world and not use their oaths to turn away people from the truth.

Verses (96-105): People who persevere on the truth in spite of opposition from their rivals are promised best reward both in this world and in the next. Some of the lame

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objections which people were raising to create doubts in the minds of the masses against the Qur'ān and the Prophet (sws) are answered.

Verses (106-111): Assurance is sounded to Muslims who were suffering at the hands of the enemies of the truth, and warning is sounded to those who succumb to these hardships and leave Islam. An indication is made of migration for the cause of truth and the reward it entails.

Verses (112-117): An example of a city is cited in order to warn the Quraysh: if they do not change their attitude, they too may face the same fate as the dwellers of this city. Moreover, they are directed not to regard anything as prohibited out of their own desire. They should consume the things God has allowed and not regard them to be prohibited because of their superstitious beliefs.

Verses (118-124): It is indicated that the same things were regarded as forbidden for the Jews as the ones which were prohibited in this religion brought by the Qur'ān. However, because of arrogance, they themselves ended up regarding certain things as prohibited to them and thereafter attributed them to the religion of Abraham (sws). Abraham (sws) was neither a Jew, nor a Christian nor an Idolater. His religion was distinct from all of them and it is this religion which the Prophet (sws) is being directed to follow. Regarding the Sabbath to be holy was a directed related to the Jews. It has no connection with Abraham's religion.

Verses (125-128): The Prophet (sws) and the Muslims are asked to invite people to their religion with wisdom and sagacity and are directed to persevere in its cause. The means of acquiring this perseverance is God-connection. They should not lose hope because of the conspiracies hatched by their opponents. God is the companion of His pious and righteous servants.

After completing this concise analysis of the meanings of this *sūrah*, I now begin its explanation.

وَمَا تَوْفِيْقِيْٓ اِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ (only God can give me this urge)

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Section I: Verses (1-9)

بِسۡمِ اللّٰہِ الرَّحۡمٰنِ الرَّحِیۡمِ

اَتٰۤی اَمۡرُ اللّٰہِ فَلَا تَسۡتَعۡجِلُوۡہُ ؕ سُبۡحٰنَہٗ وَ تَعٰلٰی عَمَّا یُشۡرِکُوۡنَ ﴿۱﴾ یُنَزِّلُ الۡمَلٰٓئِکَۃَ بِالرُّوۡحِ مِنۡ اَمۡرِہٖ عَلٰی مَنۡ یَّشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِہٖۤ اَنۡ اَنۡذِرُوۡۤا اَنَّہٗ لَاۤ اِلٰہَ اِلَّاۤ اَنَا فَاتَّقُوۡنِ ﴿۲﴾ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الۡاَرۡضَ بِالۡحَقِّ ؕ تَعٰلٰی عَمَّا یُشۡرِکُوۡنَ ﴿۳﴾ خَلَقَ الۡاِنۡسَانَ مِنۡ نُّطۡفَۃٍ فَاِذَا ہُوَ خَصِیۡمٌ مُّبِیۡنٌ ﴿۴﴾ وَ الۡاَنۡعَامَ خَلَقَہَا ۚ لَکُمۡ فِیۡہَا دِفۡءٌ وَّ مَنَافِعُ وَ مِنۡہَا تَاۡکُلُوۡنَ ﴿۵﴾ وَ لَکُمۡ فِیۡہَا جَمَالٌ حِیۡنَ تُرِیۡحُوۡنَ وَ حِیۡنَ تَسۡرَحُوۡنَ ﴿۶﴾ وَ تَحۡمِلُ اَثۡقَالَکُمۡ اِلٰی بَلَدٍ لَّمۡ تَکُوۡنُوۡا بٰلِغِیۡہِ اِلَّا بِشِقِّ الۡاَنۡفُسِ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّکُمۡ لَرَءُوۡفٌ رَّحِیۡمٌ ﴿۷﴾ وَّ الۡخَیۡلَ وَ الۡبِغَالَ وَ الۡحَمِیۡرَ لِتَرۡکَبُوۡہَا وَ زِیۡنَۃً ؕ وَ یَخۡلُقُ مَا لَا تَعۡلَمُوۡنَ ﴿۸﴾ وَ عَلَی اللّٰہِ قَصۡدُ السَّبِیۡلِ وَ مِنۡہَا جَآئِرٌ ؕ وَ لَوۡ شَآءَ لَہَدٰىکُمۡ اَجۡمَعِیۡنَ ﴿۹﴾

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Ever-Merciful.

The directive of God has been pronounced. So, do not seek to hasten it. He is pure and exalted from the things they associate with Him. He sends down angels with His command of revelation to whomsoever He wills among His servants: "Warn people: 'There is no deity except Me; so, fear Me only.'" He has created the heavens and the earth with a purpose. He is superior to things which they associate with Him. He has created a human being from a drop of water; so, he arose to become an open enemy. And He has also created cattle for you in which there is winter's attire for you and other benefits too and you also obtain nutrition from them. And in them, there is also splendour for you, when in the evening you bring them back and when you leave them to graze. And they transport your burdens to places where you could have only reached with great hardship. Indeed, your Lord is very Affectionate, very Merciful. And it is He Who has created horses, mules and donkeys so that you ride them and they are also an adornment. And He creates things which you do not know. And the straight path reaches God, whereas there are some deviant paths. And had He wanted, He would have guided all of you. (1-9)

Explanation

اَتٰۤی اَمۡرُ اللّٰہِ فَلَا تَسۡتَعۡجِلُوۡہُ ؕ سُبۡحٰنَہٗ وَ تَعٰلٰی عَمَّا یُشۡرِکُوۡنَ ﴿۱﴾[1]

The Prophet (sws) informed his people that if they do not accept his message, they would be punished by God once their period of respite expires. At this, they would

1. The directive of God has been pronounced. So, do not seek to hasten it. He is pure and exalted from the things they associate with Him.

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respond by asking to bring upon them that punishment and that they would only accept his message once they see this punishment he threatens them with every now and then. Verse 34 will present its details. The verse addresses these hasty individuals and tells them that the directive of that punishment has been announced. So they should stop this hastiness.

The words "the directive of God has been pronounced" do not merely sound a threat; they state a fact. I have explained at a number of instances in this exegesis the established practice of God about His messengers: those among his nation who profess faith in him become safe and secure and those who reject him are destroyed. A messenger of God is the yardstick between truth and falsehood and the final means of conclusive communication of the truth to his people. So, once he arrives among them, they have two choices only: either accept faith in him and be salvaged or face God's wrath and the consequence of their arrogance.

The words "He is pure and exalted from the things they associate with Him" imply that these people defiantly think that their deities would save them from God's torment whereas He is far above this; He is peerless and does not have any partners. There is absolutely no relation of superstitious beliefs with His exalted attributes. None can rival any of His attributes.

It may be noted that the verse begins with a direct address (do not seek to hasten it) and then it shifts to an indirect one (He is pure and exalted from the things they associate with Him). The eloquence in it is that the first part consists of warning and threat; hence direct address is more appropriate for it. The second part has an element of abhorrence and disgust for which indirect address is more apt. It is as if this part is said while turning away from them.

يُنَزِّلُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ بِالرُّوْحِ مِنْ اَمْرِهٖ عَلٰى مَنْ يَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖٓ اَنْ اَنْذِرُوْٓا اَنَّهٗ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّآ اَنَا فَاتَّقُوْنِ ﴿٢﴾[2]

The disbelievers had two demands: first, they wanted angels to descend on them too the way they do on the Prophet (sws) as per his claim; second, the punishment the Prophet warned them of. Thus this *sūrah* mentions both these demands in verse 33 thus: هَلْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَّآ اَنْ تَاْتِيَهُمُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ اَوْ يَاْتِيَ اَمْرُ رَبِّكَ (Do they but await that angels come to them or the directive of your Lord is given?). While the second of these demands has already been mentioned in the first verse, the verse under discussion takes up their second demand by specifying that not everyone is worthy of being sent angels to.

The words بِالرُّوْحِ مِنْ اَمْرِهٖ mean that these angels descend with the revelation of God's directive. "God's revelation" is termed as الروح (soul) because just as bodily life can only exist because of the soul, the soul can only exist because of God's revelation. It is to this fact that Jesus (sws) has referred to thus: "Man shall not live on bread alone,

2. He sends down angels with His command of revelation to whomsoever He wills among His servants: "Warn people: 'There is no deity except Me; so, fear Me only.'"

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but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." (Matthew, 4:4)

Every messenger is directed by God to tell his people that there is no deity other than Him; they should fear Him alone and only worship Him; none should be associated with Him.

خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالۡاَرۡضَ بِالۡحَقِّ ؕ تَعٰلٰی عَمَّا یُشۡرِکُوۡنَ ﴿۳﴾[3]

The word حَقٌّ means "purpose" and "objective." The implication of the verse is that God has not created this world as a means of amusement. Every part of it is replete with wisdom. There is a gradual progression in things signifying that it has a purpose and that its creator is a wise and powerful being. The consequence of this universe having an objective is that God will necessarily bring about a day in which everyone returns to Him and face accountability of their deeds. If this does not happen, it would mean that this world is a meaningless place. Verse 115 of Sūrah al-Mu'minūn points to this fact in the following words: اَفَحَسِبۡتُمۡ اَنَّمَا خَلَقۡنٰکُمۡ عَبَثًا وَّاَنَّکُمۡ اِلَیۡنَا لَا تُرۡجَعُوۡنَ[4]

The words "He is superior to things which they associate with Him" emphasize what is stated above in another way. In the first place, the idolaters and the disbelievers were not convinced of the hereafter; moreover, the only relationship they had was with their deities and intercessors who they worshipped. They thought that they were sufficient on their behalf to deal with God. This belief obviously totally negates that this world has an objective. For this reason, it has also been stated that the deities these people have pinned their hopes on will be of no benefit to them. He has no peers or partners. His attributes are so lofty that these associates can have no relationship with Him.

خَلَقَ الۡاِنۡسَانَ مِنۡ نُّطۡفَۃٍ فَاِذَا ہُوَ خَصِیۡمٌ مُّبِیۡنٌ ﴿۴﴾[5]

The word "human being" refers to idolaters and disbelievers who are under discussion. They are not named to express aversion. The implication of the verse is that such is the audacity of a human being created from an impure drop of water that he has become an inveterate foe of God and regards his recreation to be an impossibility. Verse 3 of Sūrah Qāf expresses this notion thus: ءَاِذَا مِتۡنَا وَکُنَّا تُرَابًا ۚ ذٰلِکَ رَجۡعٌۢ بَعِیۡدٌ.[6] He fights with God in support of the partners he has associated with Him. In verse 27 ahead, it is thus stated: وَیَقُوۡلُ اَیۡنَ شُرَکَآءِیَ الَّذِیۡنَ کُنۡتُمۡ تُشَآقُّوۡنَ فِیۡہِمۡ.[7]

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3. He has created the heavens and the earth with a purpose. He is superior to things which they associate with Him.

4. Then, do you think that We have created you without a purpose and you will not be returned to Us?

5. He has created a human being from a drop of water; so, he arose to become an open enemy.

6. It is a very strange thing that after we die and become dust, we would be returned to life again. Such a return is very improbable.

7. Ask them: "Where are My associates for which you would fight?"

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وَالْاَنْعَامَ خَلَقَهَا ۚ لَكُمْ فِيْهَا دِفْءٌ وَّمَنَافِعُ وَمِنْهَا تَاْكُلُوْنَ ۝ 8

The word دِفْءٌ refers to the hair and wool of animals. They are used to produce winter clothes.

Now in this and in the succeeding verses, the attention of people already under discussion is directed towards various things around them and their multifarious benefits. The purpose is to make them realize that each and everything of this universe is pointing to the fact that the creator of this universe is very noble and wise as well as merciful and compassionate. In other words, all these favours they have received are from God but they are worshipping others. The splendour and majesty of God does not make them realize that they owe an obligation towards Him and that one day they will be held accountable before Him. Among these favours, cattle are mentioned the foremost because they were the real wealth of the Arabs. They obtained food, clothes and other multiple benefits from them.

وَلَكُمْ فِيْهَا جَمَالٌ حِيْنَ تُرِيْحُوْنَ وَحِيْنَ تَسْرَحُوْنَ ۝ 9

The word جَمَالٌ here refers to splendour, wealth and grandeur and, as pointed out earlier, to their animal herds. It was through them that the real affluence of someone would be judged by them. A person would be of high social status if he had herds in large numbers and vice versa.

Here apparently the word تَسْرَحُوْنَ (when you leave them to graze) should have been mentioned before تُرِيْحُوْنَ (when in the evening you bring them back) but the Qur'ān has done the opposite. The reason for this is that the occasion of the discourse entails an expression of splendour and this is found more when the herd returns in the evening after grazing. At this time, the animals appear well-fed and fresh after eating their fodder. This splendour is not apparent in the morning when they are left to graze.

وَتَحْمِلُ اَثْقَالَكُمْ اِلٰى بَلَدٍ لَّمْ تَكُوْنُوْا بٰلِغِيْهِ اِلَّا بِشِقِّ الْاَنْفُسِ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَءُوْفٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ۝ 10

This verse refers to camels which were solely used by the Arabs for their own transport as well as of their goods. A camel can travel for very long distances and brave all kinds of hardships. In hot and desert areas specially, it was like the ship of God. It stood unrivalled in this quality.

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8. And He has also created cattle for you in which there is winter's attire for you and other benefits too and you also obtain nutrition from them.

9. And in them, there is also splendour for you, when in the evening you bring them back and when you leave them to graze.

10. And they transport your burdens to places where you could have only reached with great hardship. Indeed, your Lord is very Affectionate, very Merciful.

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The words "indeed, your Lord is very Affectionate, very Merciful" point to the real lesson which the human being benefiting from these favours should learn. A natural consequence of the God having these attributes is that these people should recognize His rights, thank Him and worship Him only. Moreover, they should not associate others with His rights by ascribing partners to Him and end up become His open foes. Yet such is the misfortune of these people that instead of being grateful on the favours they have has received, they become arrogant and bitter rivals of God. What is even from unfortunate is that if ever they are grateful, it is to others and not to God.

وَّالْخَيْلَ وَالْبِغَالَ وَالْحَمِيْرَ لِتَرْكَبُوْهَا وَزِيْنَةً ؕ وَيَخْلُقُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۸﴾[11]

After the camel, other animals are referred to which not only were used for transport by the Arabs but would also become a means of splendour when chiefs ride them. The purpose of mentioning these favours is the same as has been indicated earlier: it is God Who has blessed them with all these favours but after receiving them they forget Him and start worshipping others inebriated with their own power and majesty.

وَعَلَى اللّٰهِ قَصْدُ السَّبِيْلِ وَمِنْهَا جَآئِرٌ ؕ وَلَوْ شَآءَ لَهَدٰىكُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿۹﴾[12]

The word قَصْدُ means "straight" and قَصْدُ السَّبِيْلِ means "straight path." In this latter expression, the attribute is annexed towards its noun. The implication is that the straight path of monotheism makes a person reach God. This path is so straight that it does not have any side-walks. God has not placed intermediaries between Himself and His servants. He has opened the straight way to make them reach Him. If a person treads on it, he will reach his creator. This fact is stated thus in verse 41 of Sūrah al-Ḥijr: هٰذَا صِرَاطٌ عَلَيَّ مُسْتَقِيْمٌ (this straight path [of monotheism] directly reaches Me). In verse 52 of Sūrah Hūd, the words used are: اِنَّ رَبِّيْ عَلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ (My Lord surely is on the straight path).

The implication of the words "whereas there are some deviant paths" is that though the straight path of monotheism reaches God, people have created deviant paths of polytheism in it. They tread upon them and then go further and further away from God. It becomes very difficult for them to return to the straight path of monotheism.

The words "and had He wanted, He would have guided all of you" refer to the fact that God has given the choice to people to adopt whatever they want to. He wants them to use their intellect and be responsible themselves for what they choose. If they adopt the path of monotheism, they will reach their destination, and if they deviate from this path, they will bear its consequences. Further ahead in verse 37, the words used are:

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11. And it is He Who has created horses, mules and donkeys so that you ride them and they are also an adornment. And He creates things which you do not know.

12. And the straight path reaches God, whereas there are some deviant paths. And had He wanted, He would have guided all of you.

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اِنْ تَحْرِصْ عَلٰى هُدٰىهُمْ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِىْ مَنْ يُّضِلُّ وَ مَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ نّٰصِرِيْنَ (If you are very desirous for their guidance, what will you gain from this [O Prophet] because God does not guide those whom He leads astray [according to His law] and also no one can be their helper)

Section II: Verses (10-23)

In this section, the topic of monotheism is once again taken up from another angle: harmony among conflicting elements of nature. People who rely on their deities are then warned that these make-belief idols will be not the slightest benefit them. Every one will face God alone. He is aware of the inner and outer selves of every person and will deal accordingly with him.

Text and Translation

هُوَ الَّذِىْٓ اَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً لَّكُمْ مِّنْهُ شَرَابٌ وَّ مِنْهُ شَجَرٌ فِيْهِ تُسِيْمُوْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ يُنْۢبِتُ لَكُمْ بِهِ الزَّرْعَ وَ الزَّيْتُوْنَ وَ النَّخِيْلَ وَ الْاَعْنَابَ وَ مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرٰتِ ؕ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿١١﴾ وَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الَّيْلَ وَ النَّهَارَ ۙ وَ الشَّمْسَ وَ الْقَمَرَ ؕ وَ النُّجُوْمُ مُسَخَّرٰتٌۢ بِاَمْرِهٖ ؕ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ۙ وَ مَا ذَرَاَ لَكُمْ فِى الْاَرْضِ مُخْتَلِفًا اَلْوَانُهٗ ؕ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَّذَّكَّرُوْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَ هُوَ الَّذِىْ سَخَّرَ الْبَحْرَ لِتَاْكُلُوْا مِنْهُ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا وَّ تَسْتَخْرِجُوْا مِنْهُ حِلْيَةً تَلْبَسُوْنَهَا ۚ وَ تَرَى الْفُلْكَ مَوَاخِرَ فِيْهِ وَ لِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ وَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَ اَلْقٰى فِى الْاَرْضِ رَوَاسِىَ اَنْ تَمِيْدَ بِكُمْ وَ اَنْهٰرًا وَّ سُبُلًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ۙ وَ عَلٰمٰتٍ ؕ وَ بِالنَّجْمِ هُمْ يَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ اَفَمَنْ يَّخْلُقُ كَمَنْ لَّا يَخْلُقُ ؕ اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَ اِنْ تَعُدُّوْا نِعْمَةَ اللّٰهِ لَا تُحْصُوْهَا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَغَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١٨﴾ وَ اللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُسِرُّوْنَ وَ مَا تُعْلِنُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ لَا يَخْلُقُوْنَ شَيْـًٔا وَّ هُمْ يُخْلَقُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ؕ اَمْوَاتٌ غَيْرُ اَحْيَآءٍ ۚ وَ مَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ۙ اَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ اِلٰهُكُمْ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ ۚ فَالَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ قُلُوْبُهُمْ مُّنْكِرَةٌ وَّ هُمْ مُّسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ لَا جَرَمَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّوْنَ وَ مَا يُعْلِنُوْنَ ؕ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْتَكْبِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾

It is He Who has sent down water from the skies which you drink and also through which that pasturage sprouts in which you graze animals. From it, He grows for you crops, olives, dates, grapes and fruits of all types. Indeed, in it, there is a great sign for those who reflect. And He has put the night and the day, the sun and the moon into your service, and it is at His behest that the stars also serve you. Indeed, in it also are signs for those who understand. And the things of various types that He has scattered for you in the earth, indeed in this also there are is a great sign for those who pay heed. (10-13)

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And it is He Who has put the sea into your service so that you can eat the fresh meat from it and extract from it jewellery that you wear. And you see the ships sailing while cutting across it [so that you can travel in them] and so that you seek His bounty and so that you can be grateful to Him. (14)

And it is He Who has set forth the mountains on the earth lest it may tilt away with you and has made canals to flow in it and made paths so that you can find the way and there are other signs also and people also find their way through the stars. (15-16)

Then is He who creates similar to those who create nothing at all? So, do you not think? And if you try to count the favours of God, you will not be able to. Indeed, God is Most Forgiving, Merciful. And God knows what you conceal and what you reveal. And those whom they call besides God do not create anything; they themselves have been created; they are dead; not alive and do not even know when they will be raised to life. (17-21)

Your God is one God. But those who do not believe in the Hereafter, their hearts deny and they are inflicted with arrogance. God undoubtedly knows what they conceal and what they reveal. He does not like those who are arrogant. (22-23)

Explanation

هُوَ الَّذِیۡۤ اَنۡزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً لَّکُمۡ مِّنۡهُ شَرَابٌ وَّ مِنۡهُ شَجَرٌ فِیۡهِ تُسِیۡمُوۡنَ ﴿۱۰﴾[13]

The word أسامه means to drive animals towards their grazing grounds.

Does the phenomenon depicted in the verse show that the God of the heavens is different from that of the earth? Or, on the contrary, bears witness that one single powerful ever-living God governs both the heavens and the earth? It is obvious that this harmony between the two clearly shows that the governance of a single wise being prevails in both these elements of nature. Moreover, such is His providence that even animals benefit from what He has created for them, let alone human beings.

یُنۡۢبِتُ لَکُمۡ بِهِ الزَّرۡعَ وَ الزَّیۡتُوۡنَ وَ النَّخِیۡلَ وَ الۡاَعۡنَابَ وَ مِنۡ کُلِّ الثَّمَرٰتِ ؕ اِنَّ فِیۡ ذٰلِکَ لَاٰیَةً لِّقَوۡمٍ یَّتَفَکَّرُوۡنَ ﴿۱۱﴾[14]

The proof of monotheism is presented in this verse once again on the basis of harmony between different elements of nature. However, found in it is also a great proof of the hereafter for those who reflect. This is because when a sensitive person reflects on this world replete with wisdom and filled with so many different favours, he instantly calls out that this world cannot be a purposeless place; God has not created this world replete with wisdom and mercy without any objective. The

13. It is He Who has sent down water from the skies which you drink and also through which that pasturage sprouts in which you graze animals.

14. From it, He grows for you crops, olives, dates, grapes and fruits of all types. Indeed, in it, there is a great sign for those who reflect.

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necessary consequence of it being created with an objective is that He bring about a day in which those who fulfilled their responsibilities are rewarded and those who led their lives indifferently are held accountable.

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الَّيۡلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ۙ وَالشَّمۡسَ وَالۡقَمَرَ ؕ وَالنُّجُوۡمُ مُسَخَّرٰتٌۢ بِاَمۡرِهٖ ؕ اِنَّ فِىۡ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوۡمٍ يَّعۡقِلُوۡنَ ﴿۱۲﴾[15]

The word سَخَّرَ لَكُمُ means putting things in the service of human beings. However, how strange it is that instead of being grateful to God and keep in mind that these favours and privileges entail accountability, these naïve people have started to worship the very things that have been put to their service and forgotten God Who is the creator of everything.

وَمَا ذَرَاَ لَكُمۡ فِى الۡاَرۡضِ مُخۡتَلِفًا اَلۡوَانُهٗ ؕ اِنَّ فِىۡ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّقَوۡمٍ يَّذَّكَّرُوۡنَ ﴿۱۳﴾[16]

The implication of this verse is that these people should reflect on the various things scattered on this earth in large numbers. They have great signs for those who want to be reminded. This world could have been monotonous, dull and unattractive. On the contrary, every part of it is full of variety and diversity. Why? This is because its Creator wanted that wherever human beings look, they find some sign or the other of His power, wisdom, mercy and providence. As a result, the act of creation they witness leads them to the creator and His attributes. In other words, every particle of this world should lead them to the comprehension of a creator. The only thing needed is that they pay heed to these things and do not close their eyes while walking. Observing everything will make them draw many lessons that they should always keep in mind.

Here it should be kept in mind that the faculties which guide a person in this world are mentioned as يَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ (those who reflect), يَعْقِلُوْنَ (those who understand) and يَذَّكَّرُوْنَ (those who pay heed) respectively. They are actually mentioned in a descending order. The highest ability of a person is that he reflects on this universe. Through this reflection he is guided from multiplicity towards oneness and is able to comprehend the real purpose of this universe. If he does not have this ability, then at least he should use his intellect and be reminded of the destination towards which every single entity of this universe points and not walk about blindly. In verses 65, 67 and 69 of this very *sūrah*, the words used are يَسْمَعُوْنَ, يَعْقِلُوْنَ and يَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ respectively. This, on the other hand, is an ascending order sequence. In other words, the least ability a sane person should have is to lend ear to sane talk and try to understand it. If he is not even able to do this, then he is like an animal walking on two legs. His highest trait is to

15. And He has put the night and the day, the sun and the moon into your service, and it is at His behest that the stars also serve you. Indeed, in it also are signs for those who understand.

16. And the things of various types that He has scattered for you in the earth, indeed in this also there are is a great sign for those who pay heed.

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reflect on this universe. This is because it is this reflection due to which the doors to true knowledge and to the comprehension of the divine are opened. The Qur'ān, in reality, wants to awaken this very trait in a person.

وَ هُوَ الَّذِیْ سَخَّرَ الْبَحْرَ لِتَاْكُلُوْا مِنْهُ لَحْمًا طَرِیًّا وَّ تَسْتَخْرِجُوْا مِنْهُ حِلْیَةً تَلْبَسُوْنَهَا ۚ وَ تَرَى الْفُلْكَ مَوَاخِرَ فِیْهِ وَ لِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ وَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿۱۴﴾[17]

Concomitant indications show that a word to the effect لِتَرْكَبُوْهَا (so that you embark on it) is suppressed before لِتَبْتَغُوْا (so that you seek). The particle of copulation is indicating this suppression. After witnessing such wonders as mentioned in the verse, people should have been grateful to God; but these naïve people have set up deities for seas and oceans and have started to worship them.

وَ اَلْقٰى فِی الْاَرْضِ رَوَاسِیَ اَنْ تَمِیْدَ بِكُمْ وَ اَنْهٰرًا وَّ سُبُلًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿۱۵﴾ وَ عَلٰمٰتٍ ؕ وَ بِالنَّجْمِ هُمْ یَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿۱۶﴾[18]

Some components are suppressed here in accordance with a linguistic style of classical Arabic. They have been expressed in the translation. The construction اَنْهٰرًا actually is فَجَّرَ فِیْهَا اَنْهَارًا وَّ مَهَّدَ فِیْهَا سُبُلًا (He made canals to flow in it and made paths in it). Similarly, عَلٰمٰتٍ is actually جَعَلَ لِلسَّبِیْلِ عَلٰمٰتٍ (and there are other signs for it).

God has planted mountains in the earth which maintain its balance. He has made canals to flow in it which are beneficial for human beings. He has created paths in the earth so that people can travel from one place to anofther. Moreover, to recognize these paths, He has fixed various landmarks so that people can assess them. He then went a step ahead: the stars that glow in the night sky guide those who travel in the deserts and also are a means of measuring time. The implication is that when all these things have been created and blessed by God, should He be worshipped or other deities who have not created any of these things?

اَفَمَنْ یَّخْلُقُ كَمَنْ لَّا یَخْلُقُ ؕ اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿۱۷﴾[19]

This verse directs attention to the consequences of belief in one God and in the accountability of the Hereafter. It may be kept in mind here that the idolaters considered all the things mentioned earlier to be created by God but, in spite of this,

17. And it is He Who has put the sea into your service so that you can eat the fresh meat from it and extract from it jewellery that you wear. And you see the ships sailing while cutting across it [so that you can travel in them] and so that you seek His bounty and so that you can be grateful to Him.

18. And it is He Who has set forth the mountains on the earth lest it may tilt away with you and has made canals to flow in it and made paths so that you can find the way and there are other signs also and people also find their way through the stars.

19. Then is He who creates similar to those who create nothing at all? So, do you not think?

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regarded some of them to be associates of God and would make them share His rights and in this way equate the creator with His creatures.

وَاِنْ تَعُدُّوْا نِعْمَةَ اللّٰهِ لَا تُحْصُوْهَا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَغَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿۱۸﴾[20]

The verse implies that in spite of God's countless favours, they are ungrateful to Him and share others in His rights. Because of this unworthy attitude, they deserved that God strip them off these favours but He gave them respite because He is Most Forgiving and Merciful. He wants them to benefit from this respite and repent and make amends, and in this way become worthy of His mercy and not His wrath.

وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُسِرُّوْنَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُوْنَ ﴿۱۹﴾[21]

This verse sounds a threat and warning. They should remember that because of His mercy and compassion, God is giving them time, but they should remember that He is aware of their apparent and hidden. A day will come when everything would be exposed. The smallest of deeds will be taken into consideration and justice shall be administered. There is a subtle reference in this verse as well: these people know fully know that all these favours are given to them by God but they deliberately pretend otherwise; their hearts believe but their tongues lie. In verse 83 of this *sūrah*, this fact is stated thus يَعْرِفُوْنَ نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ يُنْكِرُوْنَهَا وَاَكْثَرُهُمُ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ (they recognize the favours of God, but pose to be unaware and most of them are ungrateful).

وَالَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ لَا يَخْلُقُوْنَ شَيْـًٔا وَّهُمْ يُخْلَقُوْنَ ﴿۲۰﴾ اَمْوَاتٌ غَيْرُ اَحْيَآءٍ ۚ وَمَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ۙ اَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُوْنَ ﴿۲۱﴾[22]

The first of these verses relates to all their baseless deities but the second one relates to their forefathers whom they worshipped. Thus it is said that those whom they worship are themselves created and have created nothing. Worshipping them is foolishness. Similarly, their forefathers they worship are dead and do not even know when they would be raised to life. What is the point of calling the dead? The attribute غَيْرُ اَحْيَآءٍ (not alive) is meant to emphasize the noun اَمْوَاتٌ (the dead).

اِلٰـهُكُمْ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ ۚ فَالَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ قُلُوْبُهُمْ مُّنْكِرَةٌ وَّهُمْ مُّسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ ﴿۲۲﴾[23]

The implication of this verse is that the actual reality is not hidden from these

20. And if you try to count the favours of God, you will not be able to. Indeed, God is Most Forgiving, Merciful.

21. And God knows what you conceal and what you reveal.

22. And those whom they call besides God do not create anything; they themselves have been created; they are dead; not alive and do not even know when they will be raised to life.

23. Your God is one God. But those who do not believe in the Hereafter, their hearts deny and they are inflicted with arrogance.

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people. However, since they do not believe in the Hereafter, they have no fear and feel humiliated to leave the things -- at the behest of one person -- they have been worshipping since the times of their forefathers. In other words, the question does not relate to truth or falsehood. It relates to their personal honour that smacks of arrogance: however much a thing be baseless, but since they have been continuously being doing it, why should they themselves render it baseless through their words and practice deeds by forsaking it?

لَا جَرَمَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّوْنَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُوْنَ ؕ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْتَكْبِرِيْنَ ﴿۲۳﴾[24]

The verse implies that God fully knows that their hearts are replete with arrogance. It is due to this detestable trait they are deliberately denying the truth and intentionally adhering to evil. God hates such arrogant and conceited people.

Section III: Verses (24-32)

In the first few verses of this section, the pranks and conspiracies of the supercilious people mentioned earlier are referred to. They would indulge in this foul play to stop people under their influence from being impacted by the message of the Qur'ān. After that, the fate they and their followers will meet in this world and in the next because of this behaviour is alluded to. Then, in contrast, the righteous and the pious are mentioned. They were advocates of the message of the Qur'ān. They reward they would be blessed with in this world and the next is also indicated.

Text and Translation

وَاِذَا قِيْلَ لَهُمْ مَّاذَآ اَنْزَلَ رَبُّكُمْ ۙ قَالُوْٓا اَسَاطِيْرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿۲۴﴾ لِيَحْمِلُوْٓا اَوْزَارَهُمْ كَامِلَةً يَّوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۙ وَمِنْ اَوْزَارِ
الَّذِيْنَ يُضِلُّوْنَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ؕ اَلَا سَآءَ مَا يَزِرُوْنَ ﴿۲۵﴾ قَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَاَتَى اللّٰهُ بُنْيَانَهُمْ مِّنَ الْقَوَاعِدِ
فَخَرَّ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّقْفُ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَاَتٰىهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿۲۶﴾ ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ يُخْزِيْهِمْ وَيَقُوْلُ
اَيْنَ شُرَكَآءِيَ الَّذِيْنَ كُنْتُمْ تُشَآقُّوْنَ فِيْهِمْ ؕ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ اِنَّ الْخِزْيَ الْيَوْمَ وَالسُّوْٓءَ عَلَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿۲۷﴾ ۙ
الَّذِيْنَ تَتَوَفّٰىهُمُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ ظَالِمِيْٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ ۠ فَاَلْقَوُا السَّلَمَ مَا كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ مِنْ سُوْٓءٍ ؕ بَلٰٓى اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿۲۸﴾ فَادْخُلُوْٓا اَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ؕ فَلَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِيْنَ ﴿۲۹﴾ وَقِيْلَ لِلَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا
مَاذَآ اَنْزَلَ رَبُّكُمْ ؕ قَالُوْا خَيْرًا ؕ لِلَّذِيْنَ اَحْسَنُوْا فِيْ هٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ ؕ وَلَدَارُ الْاٰخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ ؕ وَلَنِعْمَ دَارُ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ

24. God undoubtedly knows what they conceal and what they reveal. He does not like those who are arrogant.

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جَنّٰتُ عَدْنٍ يَّدْخُلُوْنَهَا تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ لَهُمْ فِيْهَا مَا يَشَآءُوْنَ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يَجْزِي اللّٰهُ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ۙ﴿۳۱﴾
الَّذِيْنَ تَتَوَفّٰىهُمُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ طَيِّبِيْنَ ۙ يَقُوْلُوْنَ سَلٰمٌ عَلَيْكُمُ ۙ ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿۳۲﴾

And when they are asked: "What has your Lord has revealed," they say: "Tales of the ancients." This is because on the Day of Judgement they fully bear their own burdens and also of those who they are leading astray without any knowledge. Keep in mind! Very evil will be the burden they will bear. (24-25)

Those before them had also plotted schemes. Then God uprooted their building from its foundation; so its roof collapsed on their heads and torment visited them from where they could not have even imagined. Then God shall humiliate them on the Day of Judgement and ask them: "Where are My associates in whose support you would fight?" Those endowed with knowledge will call out: "Today humiliation and misfortune will afflict the disbelievers." – On those whose souls will be claimed by the angels such that they would be doing injustice to their souls. So, at that time, they will immediately concede: "We were not doing any evil." "Why not! Indeed, God knows full well what you have been doing. Now enter the gates of Hell such that you shall remain in it forever. So, what an evil abode it is for those who are arrogant." (26-29)

And those who are pious, when they are asked: "What has your Lord revealed?" they reply: "He has revealed the best thing." Those who adopted good, for them there is good in this world also and the abode of the Hereafter is far better than this and how marvellous is the abode of the pious. Eternal orchards which they shall enter; canals shall be flowing below them; there they shall have everything they desire. God will reward the pious in this way. Those whose souls are claimed by the angels such that they are pure. They say: "Peace be to you people. Go and dwell in Paradise as a reward for your deeds." (30-32)

Explanation

وَاِذَا قِيْلَ لَهُمْ مَّاذَآ اَنْزَلَ رَبُّكُمْ ۙ قَالُوْٓا اَسَاطِيْرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ۙ﴿۲۴﴾[25]

The word اَسَاطِيْرُ is the plural of أُسْطُوْرَةٌ. It refers to something baseless which is no more than a myth.

The message of the Qur'ān, especially the history of God's messengers and their rejecters has been presented by in such an apt and effective way that it was bound have its impact. It created a great tumult in the elite as well as the masses of Arabia and gradually the whole of Arabia was swayed by it. Since the masses do not have any ambition of leadership and politics, only what is right influences them. However, they follow their leaders. For this reason, before taking any decision, they consult them.

25. And when they are asked: "What has your Lord has revealed," they say: "Tales of the ancients."

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Precisely the same situation arose regarding the message of the Qur'ān in Arabia. When this message and the warnings of the Qur'ān shook people, the commoners would go and inquire about the status of the Qur'ān from their leaders. They would ask about its divine status from them and also if the warning of punishment it was sounding in the light of the history of the previous messengers was true or not. The leaders felt the masses were being influenced by the call of the Qur'ān and this could be a potential threat to their leadership. In order to appease them, they would reply that all these historical anecdotes were tales of the ancients which have no basis. They should not worry about them. They would go on to say that their own attitude was the right one and that they were only following the religion of their forefathers. They would impress upon the masses to not be influenced by these baseless tales and be led astray by this person who is merely fabricating lies and attributing them to God.

لِيَحْمِلُوْٓا اَوْزَارَهُمْ كَامِلَةً يَّوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۙ وَمِنْ اَوْزَارِ الَّذِيْنَ يُضِلُّوْنَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۭ اَلَا سَاۗءَ مَا يَزِرُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾[26]

This verse mentions the consequences of their ill-fated efforts they were expending to stop people from the truth.

The مِنْ in وَمِنْ اَوْزَارِ الَّذِيْنَ يُضِلُّوْنَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ is for *tab'īḍ* (partial). It becomes evident from this that a person will not be totally absolved of his responsibilities on the Day of Judgement on the grounds that others led him astray. In fact, he would himself have to bear the consequences of having gone astray. The reason for this is that a person who himself has the faculties of sense and reason would not be allowed to go scot-free on the pretext that he went astray because others had led him astray. The fact is that why did he not use the intellect and insight God had blessed him with? For this reason, just as the person who led him astray will be held responsible and suffer the consequences, he too will be held responsible and suffer the consequences.

The qualifying words بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ (without any knowledge) depict the severe nature of the crime: on the one hand is the message of the messenger which is based on true knowledge revealed to him by God and on the other are these miscreants who are guiding people without any knowledge and leading them astray.

قَدْ مَكَرَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَاَتَى اللّٰهُ بُنْيَانَهُمْ مِّنَ الْقَوَاعِدِ فَخَرَّ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّقْفُ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَاَتٰىهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾[27]

The word مَكَرَ means "conspiracy" and "plot." Since all these undertakings of the miscreants were to protect their leadership, they were deliberately opposing the truth.

26. This is because on the Day of Judgement they fully bear their own burdens and also of those who they are leading astray without any knowledge. Keep in mind! Very evil will be the burden they will bear.

27. Those before them had also plotted schemes. Then God uprooted their building from its foundation; so its roof collapsed on their heads and torment visited them from where they could not have even imagined.

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Thus the Qur'ān referred to them by this word.

This is a reference to the past nations which opposed their respective messengers in the same way as the Quraysh were opposing the Prophet (sws). When these messengers would warn them of God's torment, they would not believe them because of their own affluence and prosperity. It was only when the torment visited them did they come to know of its exact place of origin. It should be kept in mind that the words of the verse do not depict a metaphor; they portray reality. Nations that have faced the wrath of God were destroyed through such earthquakes, flood and cyclones that the walls and roofs of their houses caved in upon them.

ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ يُخْزِيهِمْ وَيَقُوْلُ اَيْنَ شُرَكَآءِيَ الَّذِيْنَ كُنْتُمْ تُشَآقُّوْنَ فِيْهِمْ ۭ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ اِنَّ الْخِزْيَ الْيَوْمَ وَ السُّوْۗءَ عَلَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ۙ﴿۲۷﴾[28]

The word خزیٌ means "humiliation." Since the disorder caused by these miscreants was because of arrogance, as indicated earlier, they would be humiliated on the Day of Judgement by the Almighty because of it. The verse indicates one type of humiliation and disgrace they will suffer. The details of these words by the Almighty is mentioned further ahead in verse 86 thus: وَاِذَا رَاَ الَّذِيْنَ اَشْرَكُوْا شُرَكَاۗءَهُمْ قَالُوْا رَبَّنَا هٰٓؤُلَاۗءِ شُرَكَاۗؤُنَا الَّذِيْنَ كُنَّا نَدْعُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِكَ ۚ فَاَلْقَوْا اِلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلَ اِنَّكُمْ لَكٰذِبُوْنَ.[29] Obviously, this would be the height of their humiliation: the very associates they supported by opposing God and His messengers all their lives would regard them to be liars right at the time they needed them.

The previous verse depicted the miscreants who were leading people astray without any knowledge. Now, in their contrast, those people are mentioned who were blessed with knowledge from God: they not only lit them selves up with the radiance of this knowledge, they also guided others.

الَّذِيْنَ تَتَوَفّٰىهُمُ الْمَلٰۗىِٕكَةُ ظَالِمِيْٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ ۠ فَاَلْقَوُا السَّلَمَ مَا كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ مِنْ سُوْۗءٍ ۭ بَلٰٓى اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿۲۸﴾ فَادْخُلُوْٓا اَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ۭ فَلَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِيْنَ ﴿۲۹﴾[30]

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28. Then God shall humiliate them on the Day of Judgement and ask them: "Where are My associates in whose support you would fight?" Those endowed with knowledge will call out: "Today humiliation and misfortune will afflict the disbelievers."

29. And when those guilty of polytheism see the partners they had associated with God, they will cry out "Our Lord! Are these our associates whom we used to call upon leaving You aside?" At this, their deities will throw back their statement on them: "You are absolute liars."

30. – On those whose souls will be claimed by the angels such that they would be doing injustice to their souls. So, at that time, they will immediately concede: "We were not doing any evil." "Why not! Indeed, God knows full well what you have been doing. Now enter the gates of Hell such that you shall remain in it forever. So, what an evil abode it is for those who are arrogant."

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These two verses form an insertion in the discourse from the Almighty in order to apply what is stated by "those endowed with knowledge" on the addressees at the time of Qur'ān's revelation: those who were inebriated by their arrogance will also reach this same fate.

The words الَّذِيْنَ تَتَوَفّٰىهُمُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ ظَالِمِيْٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ refer to the fact that all those will be regarded as disbelievers whose souls would be claimed by the angels in such a state that they were being unjust to their souls by indulging in polytheism and disbelief.

The word السَّلَمَ means "to submit." The expression فَاَلْقَوُا السَّلَمَ would mean that they would concede and call for peace.

In other words, all their arrogance and conceit will only persist until the time they meet the angels of death. When this happens, their souls will be claimed by them such that they would be striking their mouths and backs, as is indicated elsewhere in the Qur'ān. All their inebriation will dissipate in thin air, they will plead very imploringly and present a false apology that mercy should be shown to them as they never committed any sin. The angels will then retort with the words stated by the verse. The word اَبْوَاب (gates) is a plural that not only indicates the vastness of Hell, but also that people will enter it through different gates depending on the nature of their crimes.

وَقِيْلَ لِلَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا مَاذَآ اَنْزَلَ رَبُّكُمْ ؕ قَالُوْا خَيْرًا ؕ لِلَّذِيْنَ اَحْسَنُوْا فِيْ هٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ ؕ وَلَدَارُ الْاٰخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ ؕ وَلَنِعْمَ دَارُ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ۙ﴿۳۰﴾[31]

A mention is now made of the attitude of the pious. Also stated is the reward they will get in this world and the next. Thus the words وَلَنِعْمَ دَارُ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ are in exact contrast with فَلَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِيْنَ of the previous verse. Just as the abode of the arrogant has no limits in being evil, the abode of the righteous has no limits in being good.

Here the pious have unequivocally been given glad tidings in this world of success and of being worthy of God's help. The reason for this, as has been indicated several times, is that it is essential for a messenger and his followers to triumph in this world too. This aspect shall be further explained under verse 41.

جَنّٰتُ عَدْنٍ يَّدْخُلُوْنَهَا تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ لَهُمْ فِيْهَا مَا يَشَآءُوْنَ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يَجْزِي اللّٰهُ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ۙ﴿۳۱﴾[32]

The word عَدْن means "place of stay and residence." It tells us that the abodes of the

31. And those who are pious, when they are asked: "What has your Lord revealed?" they reply: "He has revealed the best thing." Those who adopted good, for them there is good in this world also and the abode of the Hereafter is far better than this and how marvellous is the abode of the pious.

32. Eternal orchards which they shall enter; canals shall be flowing below them; there they shall have everything they desire. God will reward the pious in this way.

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righteous will be their place of stay. They will not merely enter them for temporary amusement; they will live in them eternally. The verb يَّدْخُلُوْنَ here is in its complete and ultimate meaning. This implies that the righteous will live in these orchards with respect and honour and will get whatever they desire.

The words تَجْرِیْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ depict the orchards in their excellence. To the Arabs, a cherished orchard was one that was on high ground and canals would flow beneath. Its height reinforces its beauty and the canals running below guarantees its lushness.

الَّذِيْنَ تَتَوَفّٰىهُمُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ طَيِّبِيْنَ ۙ يَقُوْلُوْنَ سَلٰمٌ عَلَيْكُمُ ۙ ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿۳۲﴾[33]

Just as verse 28 was an insertion (*taḍmīn*) from God in the discourse, this verse too has the same status. It connects the discourse to the situation of those times. The word طَيِّبِيْنَ occurs in parallel to ظَالِمِیْ اَنْفُسِهِمْ of verse 28. It refers to people whose souls are claimed by the angels in such a state that they do not have the slightest trace of disbelief and polytheism in them. They are paid salutations by the angels and given glad tidings of Paradise.

Section IV Verses (33- 47)

In this section, the frivolous arguments and conversations of these arrogant people are cited and refuted. They presented these arguments in support of their attitude. At the same time, the Prophet (sws) and his companions are directed to be steadfast and show trust in God. They are assured that after passing through these trials, ultimate victory was theirs.

Readers may now proceed to study these verses.

Text and Translation

هَلْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَّآ اَنْ تَاْتِيَهُمُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ اَوْ يَاْتِيَ اَمْرُ رَبِّكَ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۭ وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللّٰهُ وَلٰكِنْ كَانُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿۳۳﴾ فَاَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّاٰتُ مَا عَمِلُوْا وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿۳۴﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ اَشْرَكُوْا لَوْ شَاۗءَ اللّٰهُ مَا عَبَدْنَا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ مِنْ شَيْءٍ نَّحْنُ وَلَآ اٰبَاۗؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَّمْنَا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۚ فَهَلْ عَلَي الرُّسُلِ اِلَّا الْبَلٰغُ الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿۳۵﴾ وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِيْ كُلِّ اُمَّةٍ رَّسُوْلًا اَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوْتَ ۚ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ هَدَى اللّٰهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلٰلَةُ ۭ فَسِيْرُوْا فِي

33. Those whose souls are claimed by the angels such that they are pure. They say: “Peace be to you people. Go and dwell in Paradise as a reward for your deeds.”

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الْاَرْضِ فَانْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ اِنْ تَحْرِصْ عَلٰى هُدٰىهُمْ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِيْ مَنْ يُّضِلُّ وَ مَا
لَهُمْ مِّنْ نّٰصِرِيْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَ اَقْسَمُوْا بِاللّٰهِ جَهْدَ اَيْمَانِهِمْ ۙ لَا يَبْعَثُ اللّٰهُ مَنْ يَّمُوْتُ ؕ بَلٰى وَعْدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا وَّ لٰكِنَّ
اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِيْ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ فِيْهِ وَ لِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْۤا اَنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا كٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ اِنَّمَا
قَوْلُنَا لِشَيْءٍ اِذَاۤ اَرَدْنٰهُ اَنْ نَّقُوْلَ لَهٗ كُنْ فَيَكُوْنُ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَ الَّذِيْنَ هَاجَرُوْا فِي اللّٰهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا ظُلِمُوْا لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا
حَسَنَةً ؕ وَ لَاَجْرُ الْاٰخِرَةِ اَكْبَرُ ۘ لَوْ كَانُوْا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ الَّذِيْنَ صَبَرُوْا وَ عَلٰى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَ مَاۤ اَرْسَلْنَا
مِنْ قَبْلِكَ اِلَّا رِجَالًا نُّوْحِيْۤ اِلَيْهِمْ فَسْـَٔلُوْۤا اَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ وَ الزُّبُرِ ؕ وَ اَنْزَلْنَاۤ
اِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ اِلَيْهِمْ وَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ اَفَاَمِنَ الَّذِيْنَ مَكَرُوا السَّيِّاٰتِ اَنْ يَّخْسِفَ
اللّٰهُ بِهِمُ الْاَرْضَ اَوْ يَاْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾ اَوْ يَاْخُذَهُمْ فِيْ تَقَلُّبِهِمْ فَمَا هُمْ بِمُعْجِزِيْنَ
﴿٤٦﴾ اَوْ يَاْخُذَهُمْ عَلٰى تَخَوُّفٍ ؕ فَاِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَءُوْفٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٤٧﴾

They only await that angels come to them or the directive of your Lord arrives. The same attitude was adopted by those before them. And God was not unjust to them; in fact, they continued to be unjust to themselves. So, they were punished for their misdeeds and were surrounded by precisely what they were making fun of. (33-34)

And those guilty of polytheism say: "Had God willed, we would not have worshipped anyone except Him – neither we nor our forefathers; nor would we have regarded anything as prohibited without His directive." Those before them had also adopted this attitude. So, the only responsibility of the messengers is to clearly communicate. And We had sent a messenger in every community with the message: "Worship God only and be on guard against Satan." Then, God guided some of them and there were also some among who on whom deviation from the truth became destined. So walk about in the land and observe the fate of the rejecters. (35-36)

If you are very desirous for their guidance, God does not guide those whom He leads astray and also no one can be their helper. (37)

And while swearing strong oaths by God, they say: "God shall not raise to life the dead." Why not! This is a promise made by Him that He shall necessarily fulfil, but most people do not know. This will happen so that God clearly explains to them about what they are differing and the disbelievers know that they were liars. When We decide about something, all We need to say is that We say to it: "Be," and it happens. (38-40)

And those who have migrated in the way of God after they had been oppressed, We shall bestow on them a nice abode in this world also and the reward of the Hereafter is much more. Alas! Would that they know! It is for those immigrants who remained steadfast and who trust their Lord. (41-42)

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And before you too We had sent men with proofs and Books as messengers to whom We would send revelations. So, if you people do not know, ask men of knowledge. And We sent down the reminder to you as well so that you fully explain to people what has been revealed to them and so that they may reflect. (43-44)

Are the people plotting evil schemes become unafraid that God may thrust them together with the earth or they be visited by a torment from where they cannot even imagine or catch them while they walk about so that they cannot escape His grasp or He may seize them precisely at the time of fear. Thus your Lord is very Gentle, Ever-Merciful. (45-47)

Explanation

هَلْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَّآ اَنْ تَاْتِيَهُمُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ اَوْ يَاْتِيَ اَمْرُ رَبِّكَ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۭ وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللّٰهُ وَلٰكِنْ كَانُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ فَاَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّاٰتُ مَا عَمِلُوْا وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾[34]

The verse says that the torment which visited these people was because of their own misdeeds. God was not unjust to them because He had informed them of all the consequences. Instead of benefiting from these warnings, they demanded that the torment be shown to them and made fun of these warnings.

وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ اَشْرَكُوْا لَوْ شَاۗءَ اللّٰهُ مَا عَبَدْنَا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ مِنْ شَيْءٍ نَّحْنُ وَلَآ اٰبَاۗؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَّمْنَا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۚ فَهَلْ عَلَي الرُّسُلِ اِلَّا الْبَلٰغُ الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿٣٥﴾[35]

The implication of the verse is that if the Quraysh have adopted the same attitude as that of the previous nations, their fate too would be no different. The Prophet (sws) is told that if they think that the proof of his veracity hinges on him convincing them to accept his message, then this is not the responsibility of the messengers. Their only responsibility is to clearly communicate their message. As far as accepting or rejecting this message is concerned, it is the responsibility of his addressees and it is they who will be held accountable for it before God. It is not God's way to force people to accept good or evil. He has blessed people with freedom of choice. If someone adopts the path of the truth, he is rewarded with more guidance because of his rectitude; on the other hand, if someone adopts the path of evil, he is given respite by God.

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34. They only await that angels come to them or the directive of your Lord arrives. The same attitude was adopted by those before them. And God was not unjust to them; in fact, they continued to be unjust to themselves. So, they were punished for their misdeeds and were surrounded by precisely what they were making fun of.

35. And those guilty of polytheism say: "Had God willed, we would not have worshipped anyone except Him – neither we nor our forefathers; nor would we have regarded anything as prohibited without His directive." Those before them had also adopted this attitude. So, the only responsibility of the messengers is to clearly communicate.

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وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِيْ كُلِّ اُمَّةٍ رَّسُوْلًا اَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوْتَ ۚ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ هَدَى اللّٰهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلٰلَةُ ۭ فَسِيْرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ فَانْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾[36]

Research on the word الطَّاغُوْت has already been cited under verse 256 of Sūrah al-Baqarah.

The implication of the verse is that if these people think that God's Messengers taught them with this disbelief and polytheism, then this is against facts. What they actually said is cited by the verse.

اِنْ تَحْرِصْ عَلٰي هُدٰىهُمْ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِيْ مَنْ يُّضِلُّ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ نّٰصِرِيْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾[37]

The verse sounds an assurance to the Prophet (sws). He was going all out in trying to convince his nation. He is told that these people are now facing a moral law of God and will never mend their ways. None can help such people. God guides only those who want to be guided.

وَاَقْسَمُوْا بِاللّٰهِ جَهْدَ اَيْمَانِهِمْ ۙ لَا يَبْعَثُ اللّٰهُ مَنْ يَّمُوْتُ ۭ بَلٰى وَعْدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا وَّلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾[38]

The expression وَاَقْسَمُوْا بِاللّٰهِ جَهْدَ اَيْمَانِهِمْ means بالغوا فی الیمین واجتهدوا (they exaggerated in their oaths and expended their full force).

One of the greatest impediments for the arrogant people of Quraysh to accept faith was that they neither believed nor wanted to believe in life after death. So they vehemently swore oaths against this concept to convince the masses under their influence that the Prophet (sws) was bluffing.

The verse then negates this claim of theirs with the same vehemence. These people are not aware that this promise of God in raising them to life is destined to be fulfilled; hence they deny and make fun of it.

لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِيْ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ فِيْهِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اَنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا كٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾[39]

This verse states the reason of life after death.

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36. And We had sent a messenger in every community with the message: "Worship God only and be on guard against Satan." Then, God guided some of them and there were also some among who on whom deviation from the truth became destined. So walk about in the land and observe the fate of the rejecters.

37. If you are very desirous for their guidance, God does not guide those whom He leads astray and also no one can be their helper.

38. And while swearing strong oaths by God, they say: "God shall not raise to life the dead." Why not! This is a promise made by Him that He shall necessarily fulfil, but most people do not know.

39. This will happen so that God clearly explains to them about what they are differing and the disbelievers know that they were liars.

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اِنَّمَا قَوْلُنَا لِشَیْءٍ اِذَآ اَرَدْنٰهُ اَنْ نَّقُوْلَ لَهٗ كُنْ فَیَكُوْنُ ﴿۴۰﴾[40]

This verse dispels in their minds the improbability of the Day of judgement. God does not need any arrangements to carry out His plans.

وَالَّذِیْنَ هَاجَرُوْا فِی اللّٰهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا ظُلِمُوْا لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُمْ فِی الدُّنْیَا حَسَنَةً ؕ وَلَاَجْرُ الْاٰخِرَةِ اَكْبَرُ ۘ لَوْ كَانُوْا یَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۴۱﴾ الَّذِیْنَ صَبَرُوْا وَعَلٰی رَبِّهِمْ یَتَوَكَّلُوْنَ ﴿۴۲﴾[41]

This verse also states the reason for a judgement day and its objective. Those among them who are not aware of significance of this promise of God and of the reward of the Hereafter may think what they want, but would that they had known this! And had they known this, they would have an idea that those whom they regard as poor in this world will gain great success in the next.

These verses also explain the essence of migration: not every relocation is migration. Migration means that a person who is persecuted because of his religion is compelled to leave his dear place of residence and seek asylum in some other land. Steadfastness in this cause means even if his life is mercilessly threatened, he is not willing to give up the gift of the true religion of God. Trust means that however adverse the circumstances, he has full confidence in God that he will not be left alone by Him and shall be helped by Him. It is this steadfastness and trust which is his real provision in migration.

وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ اِلَّا رِجَالًا نُّوْحِیْۤ اِلَیْهِمْ فَسْـَٔلُوْۤا اَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۴۳﴾[42]

This is an answer to what is stated earlier in verse 33 that these people await the arrival of angels or God's torment. First, the Prophet (sws) is addressed and informed that all messengers before him were human beings; the only distinctive feature they had was that God revealed His messages to them. Then those who were raising objections are addressed and asked to consult the People of the Book before them if they were not aware of this fact. They will inform them that only human beings were sent as messengers to human beings and not angels.

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40. When We decide about something, all We need to say is that We say to it: "Be," and it happens.

41. And those who have migrated in the way of God after they had been oppressed, We shall bestow on them a nice abode in this world also and the reward of the Hereafter is much more. Alas! Would that they know! It is for those immigrants who remained steadfast and who trust their Lord.

42. And before you too We had sent men with proofs and Books as messengers to whom We would send revelations. So, if you people do not know, ask men of knowledge.

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بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ وَالزُّبُرِ ؕ وَاَنْزَلْنَآ اِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ اِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿۴۴﴾[43]

The verse says that these messengers came with proofs and scriptures and not with God's torment that these people are demanding.

Just as previous messengers were sent with proofs and scriptures, in a similar way, God has sent His reminder (His Book) to the Prophet (sws) so that he fully explains to people what was revealed to them and the differences about their religion that they had were resolved. Readers may once again look up verse 39.

The last part of the verse implies that the purpose of revealing the Book is that they should reflect and set right their deviations. If the torment comes, they will lose this opportunity. It is a great favour of God that instead of torment, He has sent His Book which is a means of resolving differences and guiding human intellect. Thus they should be grateful to God for this favour and profess faith in it. They should obtain guidance and not ask the Prophet (sws) to hasten the torment.

اَفَاَمِنَ الَّذِيْنَ مَكَرُوا السَّيِّاٰتِ اَنْ يَّخْسِفَ اللّٰهُ بِهِمُ الْاَرْضَ اَوْ يَاْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿۴۵﴾ اَوْ يَاْخُذَهُمْ فِيْ تَقَلُّبِهِمْ فَمَا هُمْ بِمُعْجِزِيْنَ ﴿۴۶﴾ اَوْ يَاْخُذَهُمْ عَلٰى تَخَوُّفٍ ؕ فَاِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَءُوْفٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿۴۷﴾[44]

These verses express surprise on their demand for punishment. They also rebuke them on this audacity. God can seize them from anywhere. What means do they have to save themselves from Him?

If God does not seize them in spite of having the authority, it is because He is gracious and ever-merciful.

Section V Verses (48-60)

In the succeeding verses, some arguments in favour of monotheism that are based on the world around human beings and the one within them are cited. The purpose is to reinforce the warning sounded to them in verses 45-47. The implication is that they should not ask the Prophet (sws) to immediately bring upon them the promised punishment. If it arrives, then none accept God can protect them from it. If they trust their deities to protect them, they should know that God has no partners. He is the one and only. No one can dare impede the implementation of His intention.

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43. And We sent down the reminder to you as well so that you fully explain to people what has been revealed to them and so that they may reflect.

44. Are the people plotting evil schemes become unafraid that God may thrust them together with the earth or they be visited by a torment from where they cannot even imagine or catch them while they walk about so that they cannot escape His grasp or He may seize them precisely at the time of fear. Thus your Lord is very Gentle, Ever-Merciful.

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Text and Translation

اَوَلَمۡ يَرَوۡا اِلٰى مَا خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ مِنۡ شَىۡءٍ يَّتَفَيَّؤُا ظِلٰلُهٗ عَنِ الۡيَمِيۡنِ وَالشَّمَآئِلِ سُجَّدًا لِّلّٰهِ وَهُمۡ دٰخِرُوۡنَ ﴿۴۸﴾ وَلِلّٰهِ
يَسۡجُدُ مَا فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِى الۡاَرۡضِ مِنۡ دَآبَّةٍ وَّالۡمَلٰٓئِكَةُ وَهُمۡ لَا يَسۡتَكۡبِرُوۡنَ ﴿۴۹﴾ يَخَافُوۡنَ رَبَّهُمۡ مِّنۡ فَوۡقِهِمۡ وَ
يَفۡعَلُوۡنَ مَا يُؤۡمَرُوۡنَ ﴿۵۰﴾ وَقَالَ اللّٰهُ لَا تَتَّخِذُوۡۤا اِلٰهَيۡنِ اثۡنَيۡنِ ۚ اِنَّمَا هُوَ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ ۚ فَاِيَّاىَ فَارۡهَبُوۡنِ ﴿۵۱﴾ وَ
لَهٗ مَا فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالۡاَرۡضِ وَلَهُ الدِّيۡنُ وَاصِبًا ؕ اَفَغَيۡرَ اللّٰهِ تَتَّقُوۡنَ ﴿۵۲﴾ وَمَا بِكُمۡ مِّنۡ نِّعۡمَةٍ فَمِنَ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ اِذَا
مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فَاِلَيۡهِ تَجۡـَٔرُوۡنَ ﴿۵۳﴾ ثُمَّ اِذَا كَشَفَ الضُّرَّ عَنۡكُمۡ اِذَا فَرِيۡقٌ مِّنۡكُمۡ بِرَبِّهِمۡ يُشۡرِكُوۡنَ ﴿۵۴﴾ لِيَكۡفُرُوۡا بِمَاۤ
اٰتَيۡنٰهُمۡ ؕ فَتَمَتَّعُوۡا ۫ فَسَوۡفَ تَعۡلَمُوۡنَ ﴿۵۵﴾ وَيَجۡعَلُوۡنَ لِمَا لَا يَعۡلَمُوۡنَ نَصِيۡبًا مِّمَّا رَزَقۡنٰهُمۡ ؕ تَاللّٰهِ لَتُسۡـَٔلُنَّ
عَمَّا كُنۡتُمۡ تَفۡتَرُوۡنَ ﴿۵۶﴾ وَيَجۡعَلُوۡنَ لِلّٰهِ الۡبَنٰتِ سُبۡحٰنَهٗ ۙ وَلَهُمۡ مَّا يَشۡتَهُوۡنَ ﴿۵۷﴾ وَاِذَا بُشِّرَ اَحَدُهُمۡ بِالۡاُنۡثٰى
ظَلَّ وَجۡهُهٗ مُسۡوَدًّا وَّهُوَ كَظِيۡمٌ ﴿۵۸﴾ يَتَوَارٰى مِنَ الۡقَوۡمِ مِنۡ سُوۡٓءِ مَا بُشِّرَ بِهٖ ؕ اَيُمۡسِكُهٗ عَلٰى هُوۡنٍ اَمۡ يَدُسُّهٗ فِى التُّرَابِ ؕ
اَلَا سَآءَ مَا يَحۡكُمُوۡنَ ﴿۵۹﴾ لِلَّذِيۡنَ لَا يُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ بِالۡاٰخِرَةِ مَثَلُ السَّوۡءِ ۚ وَلِلّٰهِ الۡمَثَلُ الۡاَعۡلٰى ؕ وَهُوَ الۡعَزِيۡزُ الۡحَكِيۡمُ ﴿۶۰﴾

Have they not reflected that whatever God has created, their shadows prostrate before God turning from the right and the left while prostrating before God and they are humble and meek? In reality, all living beings in the heavens and the earth each of them prostrate to God only and the angels too; they are not disobedient. They fear their Lord above them and do whatever they are directed to. (48-50)

And God said: "Do not make two gods; He is the one God only. So, fear Me alone." And to Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth and obeying Him only is always mandatory. Then do you fear others besides God? (51-52)

And whatever favour you have is from God alone. Then when you are afflicted by a calamity, you beseech Him only. Then when He delivers you from that calamity, one group of yours starts associating partners with Him so that it shows ingratitude to the thing We have given them. So, be merry for a few days; then soon you will come to know. And those about whom they have no knowledge, they put their share too in the things We have given them. By God! You shall be held accountable for the falsehood that you are fabricating. (53-56)

And they ascribe daughters to God. Exalted is He and for them what they desire! And when glad tidings of a daughter are given to any of them, his face darkens and he becomes anxious, He hides from people because of this ominous news. He thinks whether he should keep her in shame or bury her in the ground. Alas! What an evil decision do they make! Evil example is of those who do not believe in the Hereafter. And for God are good attributes. He is Powerful and Wise. (57-60)

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Explanation

اَوَلَمۡ يَرَوۡا اِلٰى مَا خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ مِنۡ شَىۡءٍ يَّتَفَيَّؤُا ظِلٰلُهٗ عَنِ الۡيَمِيۡنِ وَالشَّمَآئِلِ سُجَّدًا لِّلّٰهِ وَهُمۡ دٰخِرُوۡنَ ﴿۴۸﴾[45]

The word تفیئا means "to change and to alternate."

This verse states the argument in favour of monotheism found in the physical laws of nature. The shadow of everything falls on the ground as if it is in prostration before God. Then it slowly rises and when the sun is at midday, it stands vertical. Then when the sun slowly goes down, it starts to fall to the ground on the opposite side. The twenty four hours of every shadow pass in this kneeling and prostration. It needs to be noted that this prostration of the shadow is always opposite to the sun. If the sun is in the west, the shadow is in the east and vice versa. This is a subtle reference to the fact that a shadow is Abrahamic in nature. It also shuns sun-worship.

If one deliberates on this argument, it beccome evident that if a person prostrates before the sun or the stars, his own shadow negates his action. He prostrates before God, but his shadow prostrates in the opposite direction. He does not willingly prostrate before God but unwillingly he does because his shadow prostrates before Him. In Sūrah al-Ra'd, this fact is stated thus:

وَلِلّٰهِ يَسۡجُدُ مَنۡ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالۡاَرۡضِ طَوۡعًا وَّكَرۡهًا وَّظِلٰلُهُمۡ بِالۡغُدُوِّ وَالۡاٰصَالِ (۱۳:۱۵)

And whatever is in the heavens and the earth all are prostrating before God willingly or unwillingly and also their shadows morning and evening. (13:15)

In other words, a person who willingly prostrates before God, his prostration governed by physical laws is in complete conformity with his own prostration; as for he who prostrates before someone other than God, his own shadow negates his act.

The words وَهُمۡ دٰخِرُوۡنَ refer to the fact that this prostration governed by physical laws makes them humble and meek. Now if a person shows arrogance before God in His outward prostration, it means that while excersing his freedon of choice, he deviates from his instinct.

وَلِلّٰهِ يَسۡجُدُ مَا فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِى الۡاَرۡضِ مِنۡ دَآبَّةٍ وَّالۡمَلٰٓئِكَةُ وَهُمۡ لَا يَسۡتَكۡبِرُوۡنَ ﴿۴۹﴾[46]

The verse alludes to the fact that the instinct of every object of this universe is God-worship.

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45. Have they not reflected that whatever God has created, their shadows prostrate before God turning from the right and the left while prostrating before God and they are humble and meek?

46. In reality, all living beings in the heavens and the earth each of them prostrate to God only and the angels too; they are not disobedient.

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47 يَخَافُوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَيَفْعَلُوْنَ مَا يُؤْمَرُوْنَ ﴿۵۰﴾

In other words, in spite of their closeness to the Almighty such is the situation of the angels that they can never imagine taking any advantage of Him and do as they are told.

48 وَقَالَ اللّٰهُ لَا تَتَّخِذُوْٓا اِلٰهَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ ۚ اِنَّمَا هُوَ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ ۚ فَاِيَّايَ فَارْهَبُوْنِ ﴿۵۱﴾

This is a reference to God's testimony Himself in support of monotheism.

49 وَلَهٗ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَلَهُ الدِّيْنُ وَاصِبًا ۭ اَفَغَيْرَ اللّٰهِ تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿۵۲﴾

The word الدِّيْن means "obedience" and وَاصِبًا means "perpetual."

The implication of the verse is that God should be obeyed in this world as well as the next. If they fear someone other than God, then this is their mere ignorance.

50 وَمَا بِكُمْ مِّنْ نِّعْمَةٍ فَمِنَ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ اِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فَاِلَيْهِ تَجْــَٔرُوْنَ ﴿۵۳﴾

The verb جئر means "to implore and to beseech."

This is an argument of monotheism based on human nature: when people are inflicted by a calamity, they plead to God. It shows that human nature has full comprehension of God. Other deities have no place in human nature. Thus whenever a person is struck by hardship all these artificial deities disappear. Only the real God found in human nature remains.

51 ثُمَّ اِذَا كَشَفَ الضُّرَّ عَنْكُمْ اِذَا فَرِيْقٌ مِّنْكُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿۵۴﴾

The verse depicts their behaviour when God delivers them of their hardship.

52 لِيَكْفُرُوْا بِمَآ اٰتَيْنٰهُمْ ۭ فَتَمَتَّعُوْا ۣ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۵۵﴾

This verse alludes to the consequence of the situation. It is evident that the words "so, be merry" sound a warning.

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47. They fear their Lord above them and do whatever they are directed to.

48. And God said: "Do not make two gods; He is the one God only. So, fear Me alone."

49. And to Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth and obeying Him only is always mandatory. Then do you fear others besides God?

50. And whatever favour you have is from God alone. Then when you are afflicted by a calamity, you beseech Him only.

51. Then when He delivers you from that calamity, one group of yours starts associating partners with Him.

52. So that it shows ingratitude to the thing We have given them. So, be merry for a few days; then soon you will come to know.

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وَيَجْعَلُوْنَ لِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ نَصِيْبًا مِّمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ ؕ تَاللّٰهِ لَتُسْـَٔلُنَّ عَمَّا كُنْتُمْ تَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿۵۶﴾[53]

In other words, they ascribe favours of God to their deities in support of whom they have no proof.

وَيَجْعَلُوْنَ لِلّٰهِ الْبَنٰتِ سُبْحٰنَهٗ ۙ وَلَهُمْ مَّا يَشْتَهُوْنَ ﴿۵۷﴾[54]

This verse explains the heinous nature of polytheism. It may be kept in mind that the polytheists regarded angels to be daughters of God. They worshipped them thinking that if they are kept happy, they would win for them whatever place before God they wanted.

وَاِذَا بُشِّرَ اَحَدُهُمْ بِالْاُنْثٰى ظَلَّ وَجْهُهٗ مُسْوَدًّا وَّ هُوَ كَظِيْمٌ ﴿۵۸﴾ يَتَوَارٰى مِنَ الْقَوْمِ مِنْ سُوْٓءِ مَا بُشِّرَ بِهٖ ؕ اَيُمْسِكُهٗ عَلٰى هُوْنٍ اَمْ يَدُسُّهٗ فِى التُّرَابِ ؕ اَلَا سَآءَ مَا يَحْكُمُوْنَ ﴿۵۹﴾[55]

This verse depicts their reaction when a daughter is born to them.

لِلَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ مَثَلُ السَّوْءِ ۚ وَلِلّٰهِ الْمَثَلُ الْاَعْلٰى ؕ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿۶۰﴾[56]

The verse refers to an incontestable reality. However, people believe in the opposite. They ascribe those things to God which they regard evil for their own selves and claim that good consequences and a good fate awaits them. Verse 62 ahead states this: وَيَجْعَلُوْنَ لِلّٰهِ مَا يَكْرَهُوْنَ وَتَصِفُ اَلْسِنَتُهُمُ الْكَذِبَ اَنَّ لَهُمُ الْحُسْنٰى ؕ لَا جَرَمَ اَنَّ لَهُمُ النَّارَ وَاَنَّهُمْ مُّفْرَطُوْنَ[57]

Section VI : Verses (61-64)

In the succeeding verses, the Idolaters are warned that if God has given them respite, it is because He has fixed a time for everything. When that time arrives, they will not be able to withdraw nor move ahead. Simultaneously, the Prophet (sws) is

53. And those about whom they have no knowledge, they put their share too in the things We have given them. By God! You shall be held accountable for the falsehood that you are fabricating.

54. And they ascribe daughters to God. Exalted is He and for them what they desire!

55. And when glad tidings of a daughter are given to any of them, his face darkens and he becomes anxious, He hides from people because of this ominous news. He thinks whether he should keep her in shame or bury her in the ground. Alas! What an evil decision do they make!

56. Evil example is of those who do not believe in the Hereafter. And for God are good attributes. He is Powerful and Wise.

57. And they ascribe to God what they do not like for themselves and their tongues lie that for them is a good fate. For them certainly is Hell and they will be left in it.

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sounded assurance that whatever he is facing was faced by previous messengers too. His responsibility is not to force people into accepting faith and making them monotheists. His task is to only communicate the truth to them to such an extent that they are not left with any excuse to deny it.

Text and Translation

وَ لَوۡ يُؤَاخِذُ اللّٰهُ النَّاسَ بِظُلۡمِهِمۡ مَّا تَرَكَ عَلَيۡهَا مِنۡ دَآبَّةٍ وَّ لٰكِنۡ يُّؤَخِّرُهُمۡ اِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ فَاِذَا جَآءَ اَجَلُهُمۡ لَا يَسۡتَاۡخِرُوۡنَ سَاعَةً وَّ لَا يَسۡتَقۡدِمُوۡنَ ﴿۶۱﴾ وَ يَجۡعَلُوۡنَ لِلّٰهِ مَا يَكۡرَهُوۡنَ وَ تَصِفُ اَلۡسِنَتُهُمُ الۡكَذِبَ اَنَّ لَهُمُ الۡحُسۡنٰى ؕ لَا جَرَمَ اَنَّ لَهُمُ النَّارَ وَ اَنَّهُمۡ مُّفۡرَطُوۡنَ ﴿۶۲﴾ تَاللّٰهِ لَقَدۡ اَرۡسَلۡنَاۤ اِلٰٓى اُمَمٍ مِّنۡ قَبۡلِكَ فَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيۡطٰنُ اَعۡمَالَهُمۡ فَهُوَ وَلِيُّهُمُ الۡيَوۡمَ وَ لَهُمۡ عَذَابٌ اَلِيۡمٌ ﴿۶۳﴾ وَ مَاۤ اَنۡزَلۡنَا عَلَيۡكَ الۡكِتٰبَ اِلَّا لِتُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِى اخۡتَلَفُوۡا فِيۡهِ ۙ وَ هُدًى وَّ رَحۡمَةً لِّقَوۡمٍ يُّؤۡمِنُوۡنَ ﴿۶۴﴾

And if God had seized people immediately for breaching rights, He would never have left any living being on earth but He gives them respite until an appointed time. Then when their appointed time arrives, they will not be able to hold back for an instant or move ahead. (61)

And they ascribe to God what they do not like for themselves and their tongues lie that for them is a good fate. For them certainly is Hell and they will be left in it. (62)

By God! We sent messengers to nations before you also; so, Satan made their deeds seem fair to them. So, now he is their companion and for them is a painful torment. (63)

And the only reason We have revealed this Book to you is that through it you can fully explain to them what they are differing in and it is a guide and mercy for those who believe. (64)

Explanation

وَ لَوۡ يُؤَاخِذُ اللّٰهُ النَّاسَ بِظُلۡمِهِمۡ مَّا تَرَكَ عَلَيۡهَا مِنۡ دَآبَّةٍ وَّ لٰكِنۡ يُّؤَخِّرُهُمۡ اِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ فَاِذَا جَآءَ اَجَلُهُمۡ لَا يَسۡتَاۡخِرُوۡنَ سَاعَةً وَّ لَا يَسۡتَقۡدِمُوۡنَ ﴿۶۱﴾[58]

The word ظُلۡم means "breaching rights." Disbelief and polytheism are the greatest instance of breaching rights. By perpetrating them, a person breaches the greatest right of his Lord and also is unjust to his own soul the most. For this reason, the Qur'ān regards disbelief and polytheism as the greatest مظُلۡ.

58. And if God had seized people immediately for breaching rights, He would never have left any living being on earth but He gives them respite until an appointed time. Then when their appointed time arrives, they will not be able to hold back for an instant or move ahead.

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This verse is a response to the demand of the disbelievers to bring the promised doom.

وَيَجْعَلُوْنَ لِلّٰهِ مَا يَكْرَهُوْنَ وَتَصِفُ اَلْسِنَتُهُمُ الْكَذِبَ اَنَّ لَهُمُ الْحُسْنٰى ؕ لَا جَرَمَ اَنَّ لَهُمُ النَّارَ وَاَنَّهُمْ مُّفْرَطُوْنَ ﴿۶۲﴾[59]

The expression أفرط الشيئ means "to forget something" or "to abandon something."

The verse alludes to their foolishness. They think that if ever the hereafter comes, their deities will secure them a very comfortable life there. The verse asserts that there is no doubt that they will land in Hell.

تَاللّٰهِ لَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَاۤ اِلٰۤى اُمَمٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ فَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ اَعْمَالَهُمْ فَهُوَ وَلِيُّهُمُ الْيَوْمَ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿۶۳﴾[60]

This verse sound assurance to the Prophet (sws) by telling him that what he is undergoing is something all messengers of God underwent.

وَمَاۤ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ اِلَّا لِتُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِى اخْتَلَفُوْا فِيْهِ ۙ وَهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿۶۴﴾[61]

This verse spells out the extent of responsibility of the Prophet (sws): he is not required to forcibly make his addressees accept faith; he is only required to fully clarify to such an extent that they are not left any excuse regarding issues of religion in which they were differing. Accepting his call is their responsibility. It may be kept in mind that because of his conscientious nature in discharging his responsibility, the Prophet (sws) would think that if these people were not accepting faith, it was perhaps because he was not doing enough or something was amiss in his efforts. It is for this reason that he has been sounded this assurance. In verse 89 ahead, this subject is further clarified thus: وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ فِىْ كُلِّ اُمَّةٍ شَهِيْدًا عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ اَنْفُسِهِمْ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ شَهِيْدًا عَلٰى هٰۤؤُلَآءِ ؕ وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ تِبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَىْءٍ وَّهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةً وَّبُشْرٰى لِلْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿۸۹﴾[62]

The last part of the verse under discussion refers to the fact that this Book is guidance in this world and a means of mercy in the next. Those who accept this guidance in this world will ultimately be the ones who will be worthy of God's mercy in the next world.

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59. And they ascribe to God what they do not like for themselves and their tongues lie that for them is a good fate. For them certainly is Hell and they will be left in it.

60. By God! We sent messengers to nations before you also; so, Satan made their deeds seem fair to them. So, now he is their companion and for them is a painful torment.

61. And the only reason We have revealed this Book to you is that through it you can fully explain to them what they are differing in and it is a guide and mercy for those who believe.

62. And bear in mind the day when We shall raise a witness from within each community against them and We shall raise you as a witness against these people. And We have revealed the Book to you to fully explain everything and it is a guide and mercy and glad tidings for the obedient.

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Section VI : Verses (65-83)

In the succeeding verses, the idolaters are reminded of the favours God has blessed them and rebuked. They are asked whether there is any favour they can ascribe to someone other than God. The Prophet (sws) is then assured that he is not responsible to forcibly make those who are deliberately posing to not know anything accept the right path. His responsibility is to only communicate the truth to them.

Text and Translation

وَاللّٰهُ اَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَاَحْيَا بِهِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَّسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ وَاِنَّ
لَكُمْ فِي الْاَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً ؕ نُسْقِيْكُمْ مِّمَّا فِيْ بُطُوْنِهٖ مِنْۢ بَيْنِ فَرْثٍ وَّدَمٍ لَّبَنًا خَالِصًا سَآئِغًا لِّلشّٰرِبِيْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَمِنْ
ثَمَرٰتِ النَّخِيْلِ وَالْاَعْنَابِ تَتَّخِذُوْنَ مِنْهُ سَكَرًا وَّرِزْقًا حَسَنًا ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَاَوْحٰى
رَبُّكَ اِلَى النَّحْلِ اَنِ اتَّخِذِيْ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوْتًا وَّمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ ثُمَّ كُلِيْ مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرٰتِ
فَاسْلُكِيْ سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلُلًا ؕ يَخْرُجُ مِنْۢ بُطُوْنِهَا شَرَابٌ مُّخْتَلِفٌ اَلْوَانُهٗ فِيْهِ شِفَآءٌ لِّلنَّاسِ ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً
لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ وَاللّٰهُ خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يَتَوَفّٰىكُمْ ۙ وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُّرَدُّ اِلٰٓى اَرْذَلِ الْعُمُرِ لِكَيْ لَا يَعْلَمَ بَعْدَ عِلْمٍ
شَيْـًٔا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَاللّٰهُ فَضَّلَ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ فِي الرِّزْقِ ۚ فَمَا الَّذِيْنَ فُضِّلُوْا بِرَآدِّيْ
رِزْقِهِمْ عَلٰى مَا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِيْهِ سَوَآءٌ ؕ اَفَبِنِعْمَةِ اللّٰهِ يَجْحَدُوْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ وَاللّٰهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ
اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا وَّجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ اَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَنِيْنَ وَحَفَدَةً وَّرَزَقَكُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبٰتِ ؕ اَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ وَ
بِنِعْمَتِ اللّٰهِ هُمْ يَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَيَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ رِزْقًا مِّنَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ شَيْـًٔا
وَّلَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾ فَلَا تَضْرِبُوْا لِلّٰهِ الْاَمْثَالَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعْلَمُ وَاَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾ ضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا عَبْدًا
مَّمْلُوْكًا لَّا يَقْدِرُ عَلٰى شَيْءٍ وَّمَنْ رَّزَقْنٰهُ مِنَّا رِزْقًا حَسَنًا فَهُوَ يُنْفِقُ مِنْهُ سِرًّا وَّجَهْرًا ؕ هَلْ يَسْتَوٗنَ ؕ اَلْحَمْدُ
لِلّٰهِ ؕ بَلْ اَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا رَّجُلَيْنِ اَحَدُهُمَآ اَبْكَمُ لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلٰى شَيْءٍ وَّهُوَ كَلٌّ عَلٰى
مَوْلٰىهُ ۙ اَيْنَمَا يُوَجِّهْهُّ لَا يَاْتِ بِخَيْرٍ ؕ هَلْ يَسْتَوِيْ هُوَ ۙ وَمَنْ يَّاْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ ۙ وَهُوَ عَلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٧٦﴾
وَلِلّٰهِ غَيْبُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ وَمَآ اَمْرُ السَّاعَةِ اِلَّا كَلَمْحِ الْبَصَرِ اَوْ هُوَ اَقْرَبُ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ

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﴿٧٧﴾ وَاللّٰهُ اَخْرَجَكُمْ مِّنْۢ بُطُوْنِ اُمَّهٰتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ شَيْـًٔا ۙ وَّجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْاَبْصَارَ وَالْاَفْـِٕدَةَ ۙ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٧٨﴾ اَلَمْ يَرَوْا اِلَى الطَّيْرِ مُسَخَّرٰتٍ فِيْ جَوِّ السَّمَآءِ ؕ مَا يُمْسِكُهُنَّ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ
يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَاللّٰهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنْۢ بُيُوْتِكُمْ سَكَنًا وَّجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ جُلُوْدِ الْاَنْعَامِ بُيُوْتًا تَسْتَخِفُّوْنَهَا يَوْمَ
ظَعْنِكُمْ وَيَوْمَ اِقَامَتِكُمْ ۙ وَمِنْ اَصْوَافِهَا وَاَوْبَارِهَا وَاَشْعَارِهَآ اَثَاثًا وَّمَتَاعًا اِلٰى حِيْنٍ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَاللّٰهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ
مِّمَّا خَلَقَ ظِلٰلًا وَّجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الْجِبَالِ اَكْنَانًا وَّجَعَلَ لَكُمْ سَرَابِيْلَ تَقِيْكُمُ الْحَرَّ وَسَرَابِيْلَ تَقِيْكُمْ
بَاْسَكُمْ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهٗ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ فَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلٰغُ الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿٨٢﴾
يَعْرِفُوْنَ نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ يُنْكِرُوْنَهَا وَاَكْثَرُهُمُ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾

And it is God Who sent down water from the sky. Thus through it revived the earth after it had become dry. Indeed, there is a great sign in this for people who listen. And indeed there is a great lesson for you in the cattle too. We make you drink pure milk from between their faeces and blood within their bellies which is very delicious for those who drink. And from the fruits of dates and grapes also. You make things of intoxication from them and as well as things wholesome to eat. Indeed, there is a great sign in this for those who use their intellect. (65-67)

And your Lord sent His revelation to the honey bee: "Make your hives in mountains, trees and high fences that people build. Then suck juice from fruits of all types and follow the paths evened out by your Lord." From her belly comes out a fluid of different colours; there is cure in it for people. Indeed, there is a great sign in this for those who reflect. (68-69)

And it is God Who has created you; then it is He Who makes you die. And some of you are made to return to feeble age so that after knowing a lot they know nothing. Indeed, it is God Who is knowledgeable and powerful. (70)

And God has given preference to some of you over others in sustenance. Then those who are given preference do not give their sustenance to their slaves so that they become equal in it. So, do they deny the bounty of God? (71)

And God has created wives for you from your own species and from your wives has produced sons and grandsons and given you pure sustenance. Then, do they believe in evil and reject the favour of God? And do they worship those besides God who neither have authority for them in the heavens for their sustenance nor in the earth and do not have any capacity for it? So, do not cite examples for God. Indeed, God knows and you do not. (72-74)

And God cites the example of a slave who is under the ownership of someone; he does not have authority over anything. In contrast, there is another person whom We

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have granted good sustenance from Ourselves from which he spends openly or secretly. Will the two be equal? God alone is worthy of gratitude but most of their people do not know. And God cites the example of two people. One of them is dumb; he is unable to do anything and is a burden on his master. Wherever he sends him, he does not do anything right. Will this dumb person and the one who enjoins justice and is on the straight path be equal? (75-76)

And the secret of the heavens and the earth is for God only and the matter of the Day of Judgement is but like the blinking of the eye or even earlier than that. Indeed, God has power over all things. (77)

And God took you out from the wombs of your mothers such that you knew nothing. And He made for you ears, eyes and hearts so that you are grateful. (78)

Have they not seen the birds in subservience in the sky? Only God holds all of them. Indeed, there are signs in this for those who accept faith. And it is God Who created for you peace and comfort of your houses and made houses for you from the hides of the cattle which you find very light at the day of your departure and stay. And from their wool, fur and hair, He made household items for you and things of use from which you can benefit until an appointed time. (79-80)

And it is God Who made for you the shadows of the things that He created and places of refuge for you in the mountains; and made such garments for you which safeguard you from the heat and made such apparels for you that protect you in your wars. In this way does God complete His favours on you so that you remain obedient. (81)

Thus if they turn away, your only responsibility is to clearly communicate. They recognize the favours of God; then become oblivious to them and most of them are ungrateful. (82-83)

Explanation

وَاللّٰهُ اَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَاَحْيَا بِهِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ؕ اِنَّ فِیْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰیَةً لِّقَوْمٍ یَّسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿۶۵﴾ [63]

Raining down of water from the heavens and restoration of earth's lushness after it had dried bears evidence that both the heavens and the earth are controlled by the same wise and powerful God. If they had being governed by separate beings, as the idolaters reckoned, how could this harmony – on which depends the existence of this world – have resulted.

Then this is also a very clear sign of resurrection. How can it be difficult for the God Who revives a piece of land after it becomes dry and desolate with a single burst of rain to raise people from the graves in the hereafter.

The verb یَّسْمَعُوْنَ here is in its complete meaning; ie for those who intently listen, understand and then accept. Thus for them this phenomenon has the greatest proof of monotheism and the hereafter. As for those who are not prepared to listen and

63. And it is God Who sent down water from the sky. Thus through it revived the earth after it had become dry. Indeed, there is a great sign in this for people who listen.

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understand, they are about to face their doom, as per the law of God. Nothing can open their ears.

وَاِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْاَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً ۭ نُسْقِيْكُمْ مِّمَّا فِيْ بُطُوْنِهٖ مِنْۢ بَيْنِ فَرْثٍ وَّدَمٍ لَّبَنًا خَالِصًا سَاۗىِٕغًا لِّلشّٰرِبِيْنَ ۝٦٦[64]

After referring to water as a divine gift, milk is alluded to in this verse is the same capacity. For those who ponder, there are many lessons of God's providence and mercy as well as His oneness in the cattle. They graze the vegetation found on this earth. This fodder gets converted into faeces at one stage and to blood at another. Then in between these two stages, milk is produced which has not the slightest trace of faeces or blood in it. It is absolutely pure from any contamination and very tasty and nourishing for those who drink it. Does this phenomenon show that this entire universe is controlled by the intent of a single creator who is powerful, wise and merciful or does it show that different intents are working independently from one another in it?

The word عِبْرَة means to deduce a fact from another. It is this process which is the key to all his knowledge. Those who have this ability and make use of it find that if one door opens for them, many more follow suit. Those who make this ability fall into disuse end up with hearts and intellects that loom in the dark. They see full well from their eyes but comprehend nothing.

وَمِنْ ثَمَرٰتِ النَّخِيْلِ وَالْاَعْنَابِ تَتَّخِذُوْنَ مِنْهُ سَكَرًا وَّرِزْقًا حَسَنًا ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ۝٦٧[65]

The implication of this verse is that just has God has created milk for people through cattle, in a similar way, He has provided them with dates and grapes for their nourishment. People make intoxicants from them as well as pure and wholesome food. By qualifying the word "food" with the adjective "wholesome" it is made evident that making intoxicating things from dates and grapes is not their right use. In fact, it is a wrong use of these things. Their right use is that pure and wholesome food – which provides nourishment to both body and intellect – is obtained from them and not vice versa.

The reason that God has placed such variety in His favours and blessings is that people reflect and understand. Obviously, the world did not need such variety and diversity for its existence. It could have been very simple and monotonic and in fact without any tone or tinge too. However, its creator wanted that it be a reflection of His attributes so that those who reflect can reflect and gain some idea of His high attributes,

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64. And indeed there is a great lesson for you in the cattle too. We make you drink pure milk from between their faeces and blood within their bellies which is very delicious for those who drink.

65. And from the fruits of dates and grapes also. You make things of intoxication from them and as well as things wholesome to eat. Indeed, there is a great sign in this for those who use their intellect.

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immeasurable power and wisdom and unfathomable affection and mercy. This reflection should induce them to be diligent in their obligations and responsibilities.

وَاَوْحٰى رَبُّكَ اِلَى النَّحْلِ اَنِ اتَّخِذِيْ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوْتًا وَّمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ ثُمَّ كُلِيْ مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرٰتِ فَاسْلُكِيْ سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلُلًا ؕ يَخْرُجُ مِنْۢ بُطُوْنِهَا شَرَابٌ مُّخْتَلِفٌ اَلْوَانُهٗ فِيْهِ شِفَآءٌ لِّلنَّاسِ ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾[66]

After a mention of fruits, the blessing of honey is referred to in this verse.

The word "revelation" here refers to instinctive and natural guidance found in every living being by birth. This guidance is placed in them by their creator. The word ذُلُل is the plural of ذلول and means "submissive" and "docile." Here this adjective qualifies the word "path." It would mean that the paths are level and have treaded upon many times.

The reason that God a honeybee is the manifestation of God's power, mercy, wisdom and providence is that people should reflect on this, understand the attributes of the creator of this universe and try to lead a life that leads them to success both in this world and in the next.

In the above verses the attributes يَسْمَعُوْنَ, يَعْقِلُوْنَ and يَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ are sequentially mentioned and refer respectively to listening, using intellect and reflection.

It is these attributes which are the real substance of humanity and there exists a gradual ascending sequence in them which is based on wisdom. There are several realities of this universe which are self-evident. No great effort is required to understand them. A reasonable person in the first place understands them by himself and if this is not so, then since his ears are always open to what is logical, as soon as he hears them from some other reasonable person, it takes root in his heart.

The second stage is of يَعْقِلُوْنَ in which reflection and using one's intellect are needed. It is one in which premises are found in a sequence and then inferences are made from them. This stage is higher than the first and its results are also more substantial as far as knowledge is concerned. However, they can be accessed by ordinary intellect. Those who value their intellect and use this favour, are not deprived of its blessings.

The third stage is يَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ. This is the highest one. This is the status of people who continue to reflect on the secrets of the universe and continue to increase their knowledge. This status is occupied by sages. Just as the honey bee through its matchless efforts sucks juice from various flowers and makes honey from it which has nutrition and cure in it, similarly these people also gather the honey of wisdom through their efforts of reflection and deliberation. This honey has remedies for

66. And your Lord sent His revelation to the honey bee: "Make your hives in mountains, trees and high fences that people build. Then suck juice from fruits of all types and follow the paths evened out by your Lord." From her belly comes out a fluid of different colours; there is cure in it for people. Indeed, there is a great sign in this for those who reflect.

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ailments of the heart and intellect. They also remain blissful because of it and others also benefit from it.

وَاللّٰهُ خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يَتَوَفّٰىكُمْ ۚ وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُّرَدُّ اِلٰٓى اَرْذَلِ الْعُمُرِ لِكَيْ لَا يَعْلَمَ بَعْدَ عِلْمٍ شَيْـًٔا ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌ قَدِيْرٌ ۝[67]

In other words, life and death as well as the span of life are in the hands of God. The style found in the expression مِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُّرَدُّ (and some of you are made to return) shows that there is some part of the discourse suppressed before it: there are some of you who die in infancy or youth and some who reach old age. This bears evidence to the fact that the length of a life span is governed by God. None else has any say in it.

If the stress in the word لِكَيْ (so that) is fully appreciated in the expression لِكَيْ لَا يَعْلَمَ بَعْدَ عِلْمٍ شَيْـًٔا (so that after knowing a lot they know nothing), it would mean that by making some people reach the feebleness of old age, God wants to make us realize that knowledge and intellect, power and strength are all gits of God. A time comes on the very human being who felt great pride in his knowledge and intellect that he himself and others too see that like an infant he has become devoid of these faculties and abilities. He has no sense and awareness left of his physical self and becomes totally dependent on others. His intellectual and mental abilities go back to God, Who was their real bestower. This is because if anyone really knows and has power it is He. To whatever extent a person receives knowledge and power, it is from Him. For this reason, expressing pride on them is not befitting for a person. On the contrary, he should remain thankful to God for these abilities.

وَاللّٰهُ فَضَّلَ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلٰي بَعْضٍ فِي الرِّزْقِ ۚ فَمَا الَّذِيْنَ فُضِّلُوْا بِرَاۗدِّيْ رِزْقِهِمْ عَلٰي مَا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِيْهِ سَوَاۗءٌ ۭ اَفَبِنِعْمَةِ اللّٰهِ يَجْحَدُوْنَ ۝[68]

Like knowledge and intellect, sustenance and livelihood too are grants of God. Some He has given abundantly and some sparingly. No one has the authority to increase his own sustenance to any extent. Thus it is mandatory on every person to be thankful to God and not be ungrateful to Him by ascribing to others the sustenance received from Him.

The verse then goes on to direct the attention of human beings to a fact found in their nature. It then highlights the lesson that is derived from it: such are they that the affluent among them never distribute their affluence among those subservient to them

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67. And it is God Who has created you; then it is He Who makes you die. And some of you are made to return to feeble age so that after knowing a lot they know nothing. Indeed, it is God Who is knowledgeable and powerful.

68. And God has given preference to some of you over others in sustenance. Then those who are given preference do not give their sustenance to their slaves so that they become equal in it. So, do they deny the bounty of God?

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and thereby become equal to them; so how can they think about God that He has distributed the world created by Him to His servants and those subservient to Him and become equal to them. This attitude is a blatant denial of God's favours that they attribute them to those who have not the slightest share in producing them.

وَ اللّٰهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا وَّ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ اَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَنِيْنَ وَ حَفَدَةً وَّ رَزَقَكُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبٰتِ ؕ اَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ وَ بِنِعْمَتِ اللّٰهِ هُمْ يَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿۷۲﴾[69]

Like sustenance, wives and children are also God's favours. The obligation people owed to these favours was to thank God alone and profess faith in Him. But such are they that they profess faith in baseless deities and are ungrateful to the real bestower.

وَ يَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ رِزْقًا مِّنَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ شَيْـًٔا وَّ لَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ ﴿۷۳﴾[70]

This verse states the details of their belief in evil and their ingratitude. Thus not only they do not have the power stated in the verse, they can not even acquire it even if they fully exert.

فَلَا تَضْرِبُوْا لِلّٰهِ الْاَمْثَالَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعْلَمُ وَ اَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۷۴﴾[71]

The expression تَضْرِبُوْا لِلّٰهِ الْاَمْثَالَ means to state the attributes of God through parables and similes. An example of this is by regarding Him to be analogous to human beings, it is stated that he has daughters. Another example is by regarding to Him to be analogous to the kings of this world, similar attributes are ascribed to Him. The most doors to polytheism have opened through such similes and parables. For this reason, after correctly guiding people regarding God's attributes in previous verses, the doors to this deviance have been shut. Only God knows His attributes. They should only believe in the ones He states. This only is the path of guidance.

ضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا عَبْدًا مَّمْلُوْكًا لَّا يَقْدِرُ عَلٰى شَيْءٍ وَّ مَنْ رَّزَقْنٰهُ مِنَّا رِزْقًا حَسَنًا فَهُوَ يُنْفِقُ مِنْهُ سِرًّا وَّ جَهْرًا ؕ هَلْ يَسْتَوٗنَ ؕ اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ ؕ بَلْ اَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۷۵﴾[72]

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69. And God has created wives for you from your own species and from your wives has produced sons and grandsons and given you pure sustenance. Then, do they believe in evil and reject the favour of God?

70. And do they worship those besides God who neither have authority for them in the heavens for their sustenance nor in the earth and do not have any capacity for it?

71. So, do not cite examples for God. Indeed, God knows and you do not.

72. And God cites the example of a slave who is under the ownership of someone; he does not have authority over anything. In contrast, there is another person whom We have granted good

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The implication of the verse is that if they really want to hear an example of God's attributes, then here is one. Next it is stated.

وَضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا رَّجُلَيْنِ اَحَدُهُمَآ اَبْكَمُ لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلٰى شَيْءٍ وَّهُوَ كَلٌّ عَلٰى مَوْلٰىهُ ۙ اَيْنَمَا يُوَجِّهْهُّ لَا يَاْتِ بِخَيْرٍ ؕ هَلْ يَسْتَوِيْ هُوَ ۙ وَمَنْ يَّاْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ ۙ وَهُوَ عَلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿۷۶﴾[73]

If the two types of individuals stated in the verse cannot be equal, then how do they equate God with His humble and helpless creatures?

وَلِلّٰهِ غَيْبُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ وَمَآ اَمْرُ السَّاعَةِ اِلَّا كَلَمْحِ الْبَصَرِ اَوْ هُوَ اَقْرَبُ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿۷۷﴾[74]

This verse admonishes the stubborn addressees during the course of this discourse. They should not regard the Day of Judgement to be far away. If its time of arrival is not known, it does not mean that it will not come. This secret of the heavens and the earth is known to God only.

وَاللّٰهُ اَخْرَجَكُمْ مِّنْۢ بُطُوْنِ اُمَّهٰتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ شَيْـًٔا ۙ وَّجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْاَبْصَارَ وَالْاَفْـِٕدَةَ ۙ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿۷۸﴾[75]

In other words, at his birth, an individual is only a lump of flesh. He is devoid of knowledge, intellect and various powers. Only later is he blessed with these. The obligation they owed to these favours of God was to be grateful to Him but most of them are thankless. In verse 23 of Sūrah al-Mulk, it is said: قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِيْٓ اَنْشَاَكُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَ الْاَبْصَارَ وَالْاَفْـِٕدَةَ ؕ قَلِيْلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُوْنَ[76]

اَلَمْ يَرَوْا اِلَى الطَّيْرِ مُسَخَّرٰتٍ فِيْ جَوِّ السَّمَآءِ ؕ مَا يُمْسِكُهُنَّ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿۷۹﴾[77]

The implication of the verse is that if they see with open eyes, they will know that

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sustenance from Ourselves from which he spends openly or secretly. Will the two be equal? God alone is worthy of gratitude but most of their people do not know.

73. And God cites the example of two people. One of them is dumb; he is unable to do anything and is a burden on his master. Wherever he sends him, he does not do anything right. Will this dumb person and the one who enjoins justice and is on the straight path be equal?

74. And the secret of the heavens and the earth is for God only and the matter of the Day of Judgement is but like the blinking of the eye or even earlier than that. Indeed, God has power over all things.

75. And God took you out from the wombs of your mothers such that you knew nothing. And He made for you ears, eyes and hearts so that you are grateful.

76. Tell them: "It is He Who has created you, and made for you ears, eyes and hearts. Yet, seldom are you grateful."

77. Have they not seen the birds in subservience in the sky? Only God holds all of them. Indeed, there are signs in this for those who accept faith.

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all things have been provided with their needs by God. An example of this is then stated. In verse 19 of Sūrah al-Mulk, it is similarly said: اَوَلَمۡ يَرَوۡا اِلَى الطَّيۡرِ فَوۡقَهُمۡ صٰٓفّٰتٍ وَّيَقۡبِضۡنَ ۛ مَا يُمۡسِكُهُنَّ اِلَّا الرَّحۡمٰنُ ؕ اِنَّهٗ بِكُلِّ شَىۡءٍۢ بَصِيۡرٌ.[78]

The last sentence of the verse says that there are several signs for those who want to accept faith. The greatest of these is that the creator of this universe is very merciful. He has provided things of need to everything He has created and also taught them the way to use them. This shows that this universe under the control of the one and only God. It is He Who creates harmony between opposing elements and makes the atmosphere conducive for the birds to fly. Also evident from this is that if something is stationary at a place, it is because holds God so. In verses 15-17 of Sūrah al-Mulk, it is said:

هُوَ الَّذِىۡ جَعَلَ لَـكُمُ الۡاَرۡضَ ذَلُوۡلًا فَامۡشُوۡا فِىۡ مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوۡا مِنۡ رِّزۡقِهٖ ؕ وَاِلَيۡهِ النُّشُوۡرُ ءَاَمِنۡتُمۡ مَّنۡ فِى السَّمَآءِ اَنۡ يَّخۡسِفَ بِكُمُ الۡاَرۡضَ فَاِذَا هِىَ تَمُوۡرُ اَمۡ اَمِنۡتُمۡ مَّنۡ فِى السَّمَآءِ اَنۡ يُّرۡسِلَ عَلَيۡكُمۡ حَاصِبًا ؕ فَسَتَعۡلَمُوۡنَ كَيۡفَ نَذِيۡرِ[79]

وَلَقَدۡ كَذَّبَ الَّذِيۡنَ مِنۡ قَبۡلِهِمۡ فَكَيۡفَ كَانَ نَكِيۡرِ ۝ اَوَلَمۡ يَرَوۡا اِلَى الطَّيۡرِ فَوۡقَهُمۡ صٰٓفّٰتٍ وَّيَقۡبِضۡنَ ۛ مَا يُمۡسِكُهُنَّ اِلَّا الرَّحۡمٰنُ ؕ اِنَّهٗ بِكُلِّ شَىۡءٍۢ بَصِيۡرٌ ۝

This verse cites more favours of God.

وَاللّٰهُ جَعَلَ لَـكُمۡ مِّنۡۢ بُيُوۡتِكُمۡ سَكَنًا وَّجَعَلَ لَـكُمۡ مِّنۡ جُلُوۡدِ الۡاَنۡعَامِ بُيُوۡتًا تَسۡتَخِفُّوۡنَهَا يَوۡمَ ظَعۡنِكُمۡ وَيَوۡمَ اِقَامَتِكُمۡ ۙ وَمِنۡ اَصۡوَافِهَا وَاَوۡبَارِهَا وَاَشۡعَارِهَاۤ اَثَاثًا وَّمَتَاعًا اِلٰى حِيۡنٍ ۝٨٠[80]

This verse cites more favours of God.

وَاللّٰهُ جَعَلَ لَـكُمۡ مِّمَّا خَلَقَ ظِلٰلًا وَّجَعَلَ لَـكُمۡ مِّنَ الۡجِبَالِ اَكۡنَانًا وَّجَعَلَ لَـكُمۡ سَرَابِيۡلَ تَقِيۡكُمُ الۡحَرَّ وَسَرَابِيۡلَ تَقِيۡكُمۡ بَاۡسَكُمۡ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يُتِمُّ نِعۡمَتَهٗ عَلَيۡكُمۡ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تُسۡلِمُوۡنَ ۝٨١[81]

The mention of clothes with reference to protection from heat takes into account the

78. Have they not seen the birds above them? They fly with outstretched wings, and they also draw them in. None except the Most Gracious is holding them. Indeed, He keeps a watch on all things.

79. He Who made the earth an obedient camel; so, walk about in its shoulders and eat from Your Lord's subsistence and you shall then gather before Him. Are you not afraid of Him Who is in the heavens that He may thrust you in the earth and it suddenly start running swiftly? Are you not afraid of Him Who is in the heavens that He may send upon you a stone-hurling wind so that you know how My warning is?

80. And it is God Who created for you peace and comfort of your houses and made houses for you from the hides of the cattle which you find very light at the day of your departure and stay. And from their wool, fur and hair, He made household items for you and things of use from which you can benefit until an appointed time.

81. And it is God Who made for you the shadows of the things that He created and places of refuge for you in the mountains; and made such garments for you which safeguard you from the heat and made such apparels for you that protect you in your wars. In this way does God complete His favours on you so that you remain obedient.

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foremost addressees of the Qur'ān: the Arabs. In fact, what is mentioned earlier also keeps them and their nomadic life into account. In order to understand the finesse and efficacy of the discourse, it is essential to give due regard to this aspect of the nature of address too.

It must also be kept in mind that the things that are mentioned earlier are items of daily use which every member of the group being addressed encountered. By mentioning them, it is as if the Qur'ān has directed attention to the fact that when these people cannot ascribe any of these things to someone other than God, why do they worship beings besides Him? Where have they come from? The truth is that they must consign themselves to God Who has arranged for all their needs, whether small or big.

فَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ الْبَلٰغُ الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿۸۲﴾[82]

This verse addresses the Prophet (sws) and tells him what his responsibility is. After fulfilling it, he should leave them alone. They will see the consequences of their stubbornness.

يَعْرِفُوْنَ نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ يُنْكِرُوْنَهَا وَاَكْثَرُهُمُ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿۸۳﴾[83]

The verse implies that these people deliberately pretend about the origin of these favours and most of them are ingrates. Only a few among them will accept faith. So the Prophet (sws) should leave them to face the consequences.

Section VII : Verses (84-90)

Earlier the farthest limit of a messenger's responsibility has been made evident. In the succeeding verses, it is said that once a messenger conclusively communicates the truth to a nation, it is not left with any excuse to present before God. Messengers have been sent by Him to every nation for the preaching of the truth and for its conclusive communication. On the Day of Judgement, they will be asked by Him to bear evidence that they have conveyed God's message to them. Prophet Muḥammad occupies this very status for his nation. For this purpose, God has sent down His book to him. At the end, the basic message of this Book is briefly referred to.

Readers may now proceed to study these verses.

Text and Translation

وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ مِنْ كُلِّ اُمَّةٍ شَهِيْدًا ثُمَّ لَا يُؤْذَنُ لِلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَلَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُوْنَ ﴿۸۴﴾ وَاِذَا رَاَ الَّذِيْنَ

82. Thus if they turn away, your only responsibility is to clearly communicate.

83. They recognize the favours of God; then become oblivious to them and most of them are ungrateful.

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ظَلَمُوا الْعَذَابَ فَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنْظَرُوْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَاِذَا رَاَ الَّذِيْنَ اَشْرَكُوْا شُرَكَآءَهُمْ قَالُوْا رَبَّنَا هٰٓؤُلَآءِ
شُرَكَآؤُنَا الَّذِيْنَ كُنَّا نَدْعُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِكَ ۚ فَاَلْقَوْا اِلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلَ اِنَّكُمْ لَكٰذِبُوْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَاَلْقَوْا اِلَى اللّٰهِ يَوْمَئِذِ ِۨ السَّلَمَ وَ
ضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَ صَدُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ زِدْنٰهُمْ عَذَابًا فَوْقَ الْعَذَابِ بِمَا
كَانُوْا يُفْسِدُوْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾ وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ فِيْ كُلِّ اُمَّةٍ شَهِيْدًا عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ اَنْفُسِهِمْ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ شَهِيْدًا عَلٰى هٰٓؤُلَآءِ ؕ
وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ تِبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّ هُدًى وَّ رَحْمَةً وَّ بُشْرٰى لِلْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿٨٩﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَاْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَ
الْاِحْسَانِ وَاِيْتَآئِ ذِي الْقُرْبٰى وَيَنْهٰى عَنِ الْفَحْشَآءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ ۚ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٩٠﴾

And bear in mind the day when We shall raise forth a witness from each community. Then those who would have disbelieved will neither be given permission to present an excuse nor would they be requested to please God. And when those who would have been guilty of oppression, see the torment, it will not be eased from them nor will they be granted reprieve. And when those guilty of polytheism see the partners they had associated with God, they will cry out "Our Lord! Are these our associates whom we used to call upon leaving You aside?" At this, their deities will throw back their statement on them: "You are absolute liars." And on that day, they will concede defeat before God and the falsehood they were fabricating, all of it will vanish. Those who disbelieved and stopped people from the path of God, We shall increase torment after torment for them because of the disorder they had been working. (84-88)

And bear in mind the day when We shall raise a witness from within each community against them and We shall raise you as a witness against these people. And We have revealed the Book to you to fully explain everything and it is a guide and mercy and glad tidings for the obedient. Indeed, God directs you to justice, virtue and to give to the kin and stops you from lewdness, evil and rebelliousness. He counsels you so that you receive a reminder. (89-90)

Explanation

وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ مِنْ كُلِّ اُمَّةٍ شَهِيْدًا ثُمَّ لَا يُؤْذَنُ لِلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَلَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُوْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾[84]

This verse warns the disbelievers to not increase in their rebelliousness.

The word اُمَّة here refers to the community of addressees towards which a messenger is sent.

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84. And bear in mind the day when We shall raise forth a witness from each community. Then those who would have disbelieved will neither be given permission to present an excuse nor would they be requested to please God.

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The word شَهِيْد (witness) refers to the messenger because it is he who in this world bears witness to the truth before his community and in the next world too, it will be he who will bear witness before it that he had communicated God's religion to it.

After the words ثُمَّ لَا يُؤْذَنُ لِلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا (then those who would have disbelieved will neither be given permission), a part of the sentence is suppressed which is expressed in the translation.

The word إستعتاب means to demand something from someone in order to alleviate that person's grievances. Here it means that on the Day of Judgement the disbelievers and the defiant will not be requested to try to please God. This is because the chance of this would have expired and the time for reward and punishment would have arrived.

وَاِذَا رَاَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوا الْعَذَابَ فَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنْظَرُوْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾[85]

The words "who would have been guilty of oppression" refer to the polytheists who by indulging in polytheism not only usurped the rights of God but also oppressed their own souls.

وَ اِذَا رَاَ الَّذِيْنَ اَشْرَكُوْا شُرَكَآءَهُمْ قَالُوْا رَبَّنَا هٰٓؤُلَآءِ شُرَكَآؤُنَا الَّذِيْنَ كُنَّا نَدْعُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِكَ ۚ فَاَلْقَوْا اِلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلَ اِنَّكُمْ لَكٰذِبُوْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾[86]

It may be kept in mind that the statement of the polytheists cited in the above verse: "are these our associates whom we used to call upon leaving You aside" would be meant to absolve themselves. Its implication being that these associates were the real culprits which led them astray. The harsh answer given by the associates in response can then be gauged in this background.

وَاَلْقَوْا اِلَى اللّٰهِ يَوْمَئِذِ ِۨالسَّلَمَ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾[87]

Research on the word السَّلَمَ has already been cited under verse 28.

The verse implies that when matters will reach the extent that the deities they worshipped all their lives will regard them to be liars in their face, no option will remain for them to present any excuse; they will then concede defeat and their deities who they regarded associates of God by fabricating falsehood against Him will vanish.

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85. And when those who would have been guilty of oppression, see the torment, it will not be eased from them nor will they be granted reprieve.

86. And when those guilty of polytheism see the partners they had associated with God, they will cry out "Our Lord! Are these our associates whom we used to call upon leaving You aside?" At this, their deities will throw back their statement on them: "You are absolute liars."

87. And on that day, they will concede defeat before God and the falsehood they were fabricating, all of it will vanish.

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Polytheism here is call "fabricating falsehood." The reason for this is that the idolaters would make a false claim regarding their deities; they would say that God Himself has made them His partner. This obviously is a concocted lie.

اَلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَصَدُّوْا عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ زِدْنٰهُمْ عَذَابًا فَوْقَ الْعَذَابِ بِمَا كَانُوْا يُفْسِدُوْنَ ﴿۸۸﴾[88]

This verse refers to those leaders of the idolaters and the disbelievers who not only were guilty of idolatry and disbelief themselves, they would also stop others from the path of God.

وَيَوْمَ نَبْعَثُ فِيْ كُلِّ اُمَّةٍ شَهِيْدًا عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ اَنْفُسِهِمْ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ شَهِيْدًا عَلٰى هٰٓؤُلَآءِ ؕ وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ تِبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةً وَّبُشْرٰى لِلْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿۸۹﴾[89]

The topic discussed in this verse has already been brought up in verse 84 earlier. Here, the words "We shall raise you as a witness against these people" are added. The expression "these people" refers to the Arabs to which Muḥammad (sws) was directly sent and who formed his addressees. It may be kept in mind that the Prophet (sws)'s preaching had two dimensions. Firstly, towards his own nation, and secondly, towards all mankind that was to come until the Day of Judgement. This second dimension was through his nation which has the status of "witnesses to the truth" and which is entrusted with this responsibility until the Day of Judgement.

The words "and We have revealed the Book to you to fully explain everything" refer to the fact that the Book is a means of bearing witness to the truth in this world and also a means of conclusive communication. The Book is further introduced as a guidance, mercy and glad tidings for those who completely consign themselves to God. In other words, this Book will guide them to the straight path; those adopt this path will earn the mercy of the most gracious God and they will receive glad tidings of this beforehand.

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَاْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْاِحْسَانِ وَاِيْتَآئِ ذِي الْقُرْبٰى وَيَنْهٰى عَنِ الْفَحْشَآءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ ۚ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿۹۰﴾[90]

This great verse is a summary of all the dos and don'ts of religion. It delineates the basis of all things which the Qur'ān directs to adopt and also of all things which it prohibits. The basis of all the dos of the Qur'ān is justice (*'adl*), goodness (*iḥsān*) and

88. Those who disbelieved and stopped people from the path of God, We shall increase torment after torment for them because of the disorder they had been working.

89. And bear in mind the day when We shall raise a witness from within each community against them and We shall raise you as a witness against these people. And We have revealed the Book to you to fully explain everything and it is a guide and mercy and glad tidings for the obedient.

90. Indeed, God directs you to justice, virtue and to give to the kin and stops you from lewdness, evil and rebelliousness. He counsels you so that you receive a reminder.

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spending on kindred and the essence of disorder is found in its don'ts indicated comprehensively by the words lewdness (*faḥshā'*), evil (*munkar*) and rebelliousness (*baghī*). The purpose of mentioning these here is to warn those who are trying their best to oppose the Qur'ān so that they think about the teachings of the Book they are opposing and that doing this is tantamount to opposing justice and goodness and supporting evil and disorder.

Here the bases of dos and don'ts are delineated very concisely. It does not become evident from here that which of the directives fall under the category of justice (*'adl*), goodness (*iḥsān*) and which under lewdness (*faḥshā'*), evil (*munkar*) and rebelliousness (*baghī*). These details are provided in verses 22-39 of Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl, which forms a pair with the current *sūrah*. Hence it was very appropriate for Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl to explain the rather concise nature of these directives. In order to avoid repetition, I will also elaborate on this explanation in the exegesis of Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl. When the important components of the directives of justice (*'adl*), goodness (*iḥsān*), lewdness (*faḥshā'*), evil (*munkar*) and rebelliousness (*baghī*) will be at hand in that *sūrah*, it will become very easy to understand these directives. It is there I will insha'Allah explain that there is great harmony in this elaboration presented with the ten commandments of the Torah. It will thus become evident from this that these directives related to good and evil were acknowledged in previous religions also.

Here briefly readers should just keep in mind that justice (*'adl*), means that we faithfully fulfil the right of a person imposed on us whether the person is weak or powerful, liked or disliked.

As for goodness (*iḥsān*), it is something over and above justice (*'adl*). It does not merely entail fulfilling someone's right; it entails doing over and above it in a generous way.

Spending on kindred (*ītā dhī al-qurbā*) is a very important corollary of goodness (*iḥsān*). The kindred are already worthy of justice and goodness because of their status. Every affluent person should furthermore magnanimously spend on them.

Faḥshā' means blatant lewdness. Examples include fornication, adultery and sodomy besides other things.

Munkar is the opposite of *ma'rūf*. The latter refers to all those good things which are in currency in a good society. Thus, for example, hospitality, helping travellers and all other similar virtues are included in it. Since *munkar* is its opposite, it would mean all those things which conflict good traditions and etiquette.

Baghī refers to rebelliousness and committing excess. In other words, it means that a person uses his power and influence in an illegitimate way and tries to coerce people.

Readers may content themselves with this brief explanation. As stated, details will be provided in the next *sūrah*.

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Section VIII : Verses (91-95)

In the succeeding verses, the Jews are addressed. Without naming them their reference has suddenly come up much like the way an orator changes his content by changing his addressees. Even if the name if not taken, the content of the speech shows who the entity is. In this phase, the Jews were not unbiased in the matter of Islam. Sensing a threat from it, they had started to oppose it by conspiring against it. They had started to support the leaders of the Quraysh who were zealously opposing Islam. Here the Qur'ān has rebuked the Jews on this mischief. They are ticked off that even after entering into a covenant with God they have entered into the ranks of His adversaries merely because of jealousy; they must not behave like the old woman who spun her thread from her own hands and then tore it up into shreds. On similar lines, they are tearing up their covenant with God into shreds. They must not sell this covenant for the pleasures of this world and not use their oaths to lead people away from the truth.

Readers may now study these verses.

Text and Translation

وَاَوْفُوْا بِعَهْدِ اللّٰهِ اِذَا عٰهَدْتُّمْ وَلَا تَنْقُضُوا الْاَيْمَانَ بَعْدَ تَوْكِيْدِهَا وَقَدْ جَعَلْتُمُ اللّٰهَ عَلَيْكُمْ كَفِيْلًا ؕ اِنَّ
اللّٰهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿۹۱﴾ وَلَا تَكُوْنُوْا كَالَّتِيْ نَقَضَتْ غَزْلَهَا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ اَنْكَاثًا ؕ تَتَّخِذُوْنَ اَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلًا
بَيْنَكُمْ اَنْ تَكُوْنَ اُمَّةٌ هِيَ اَرْبٰى مِنْ اُمَّةٍ ؕ اِنَّمَا يَبْلُوْكُمُ اللّٰهُ بِهٖ ؕ وَلَيُبَيِّنَنَّ لَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ مَا كُنْتُمْ فِيْهِ
تَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿۹۲﴾ وَلَوْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً وَّلٰكِنْ يُّضِلُّ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَهْدِيْ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ؕ وَلَتُسْـَٔلُنَّ
عَمَّا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿۹۳﴾ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوْٓا اَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلًا بَيْنَكُمْ فَتَزِلَّ قَدَمٌۢ بَعْدَ ثُبُوْتِهَا وَتَذُوْقُوا السُّوْٓءَ بِمَا
صَدَدْتُّمْ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَلَكُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿۹۴﴾ وَلَا تَشْتَرُوْا بِعَهْدِ اللّٰهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيْلًا ؕ اِنَّمَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ هُوَ
خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۹۵﴾

And fulfil your promise with God when you have solemnized it and do not break your oaths after strongly swearing them even though you have made God their witness. Indeed, God knows what you do. And be not be like that woman who strongly spun her thread and then herself tore it up into shreds. You make your oaths a means of disorder between one another for fear that one nation may move ahead from another. God is only testing you through this. And on the Day of Judgement, He shall fully make evident to you what you are differing in. (91-92)

And had God wanted, He would have made you into one community but He leads astray whomsoever He wants and guides whomsoever He wants. And you will

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certainly be questioned about whatever you are doing. (93)

And do not make your oaths a means of mutual deception lest a firmly grounded step is undone and you are made to taste the flavour of torment because you stopped [people from] the path of God, and for you is a great punishment. And do not sell God's covenant for a paltry price. Whatever is with God is better for you, if you know. (94-95)

Explanation

وَ اَوۡفُوۡا بِعَهۡدِ اللّٰهِ اِذَا عٰهَدۡتُّمۡ وَ لَا تَنۡقُضُوا الۡاَيۡمَانَ بَعۡدَ تَوۡكِيۡدِهَا وَ قَدۡ جَعَلۡتُمُ اللّٰهَ عَلَيۡكُمۡ كَفِيۡلًا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعۡلَمُ مَا تَفۡعَلُوۡنَ ﴿۹۱﴾[91]

Earlier in verse 88, the miscreants of the Quraysh who were trying their best to stop people from God's religion have been mentioned. Now, in this regard, the Jews are addressed without naming them. This is because by this time they – with all their guiles and deception – had started to support this campaign of stopping people from going towards God.

In this background, the verse addresses them with the words cited.

It may be kept in mind that Moses (sws) would present every directive of the *sharī'ah* before all his community and after calling God as his witness and guarantor would ask people on oath to abide by it. His followers would promise on oath to follow that directive. In this way, their whole *sharī'ah* was like a covenant and testament between God and the Israelites. It is for this reason that the Torah is called a Testament. Just as this Testament consisted of general directives of the *sharī'ah*, it also consisted of a covenant that was taken from the Israelites to support a prophet who will come among the Ishmaelites. Earlier it has been pointed out under verse 90 that the foundations of the positive as well as proscribed directives of the Qur'ān are precisely the same as the ten commandments of the Torah.

It is to these covenants that the Qur'ān has reminded the Israelites here.

وَ لَا تَكُوۡنُوۡا كَالَّتِىۡ نَقَضَتۡ غَزۡلَهَا مِنۡۢ بَعۡدِ قُوَّةٍ اَنۡكَاثًا ؕ تَتَّخِذُوۡنَ اَيۡمَانَكُمۡ دَخَلًا بَيۡنَكُمۡ اَنۡ تَكُوۡنَ اُمَّةٌ هِىَ اَرۡبٰى مِنۡ اُمَّةٍ ؕ اِنَّمَا يَبۡلُوۡكُمُ اللّٰهُ بِهٖ ؕ وَ لَيُبَيِّنَنَّ لَكُمۡ يَوۡمَ الۡقِيٰمَةِ مَا كُنۡتُمۡ فِيۡهِ تَخۡتَلِفُوۡنَ ﴿۹۲﴾[92]

The word اَنۡكَاث is the plural of نِكٌّ. It refers to a rope or cloth that has been shredded.

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91. And fulfil your promise with God when you have solemnized it and do not break your oaths after strongly swearing them even though you have made God their witness. Indeed, God knows what you do.

92. And be not be like that woman who strongly spun her thread and then herself tore it up into shreds. You make your oaths a means of disorder between one another for fear that one nation may move ahead from another. God is only testing you through this. And on the Day of Judgement, He shall fully make evident to you what you are differing in.

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The word دَخَل means deception and fraud.

The verse refers to the connivances and conspiraces of the Jews. They had begun stopping people from accepting Islam or to shake and jolt those who had accepted Islam. By swearing oaths, they would try to convince people that the new religion was entirely different from the religion of God; that there was no proof of it in their scriptures nor had their prophets referred to it. Since the Jews were by and large invested with the sanction of religious holiness, their oaths would create doubts in the hearts of those who were not fully aware of their machinations and hidden schemes.

In this verse, before the word اَنۡ in the expression اَنۡ تَكُوۡنَ اُمَّةٌ the word مخافة (for fear) or some other word of similar meaning is suppressed. Here the real motive of the malignant campaign of the Jews is exposed: they were undertaking this out of jealousy with the Ishmaelites lest they may overtake them in religious and political leadership. Instead of being supporters of the truth, they had become its adversaries because of this attitude. The fact was that the Almighty was testing them whether they become its supporters or get entangled in their prejudices. On the day of judgement, He will expose their deliberate intent of hiding the truth.

The words الَّتِیۡ and الَّذِیۡ are though meant to specify what comes after them but in parables in some cases they are meant to portray the picture before the eyes. Hence there is no need to refer to some specific old woman. It is enough to imagine any old woman which portrays the whole situation.

Just as the Jews have been compared here with an old woman, in verses 175-176 of Sūrah al-A‘rāf, they have compared with a person who was blessed by God with His guidance and teachings but he ran away. The consequence was that he was lured by Satan and went astray. After that, they are compared to a dog who always hangs out his tongue. This is what he does whether he is scolded or not. In this comparison too, the word الَّذِیۡ is used and there I have explained that its purpose is to merely depict the situation and not to point to any particular person.

وَلَوۡ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ لَجَعَلَكُمۡ اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً وَّلٰكِنۡ يُّضِلُّ مَنۡ يَّشَآءُ وَيَهۡدِىۡ مَنۡ يَّشَآءُ ؕ وَلَتُسۡـَٔـلُنَّ عَمَّا كُنۡتُمۡ تَعۡمَلُوۡنَ ﴿۹۳﴾ [93]

The implication of the verse is that God could have forced people to become one community; instead He chose to give people freedom of choice and in this way test them. Those among them who seek guidance are given guidance and vice versa. It has been explained at a number of instances in this exegesis that God’s will is governed by His wisdom.

Consider next the last part of the verse “and you will certainly be questioned about whatever you are doing.” People must remember that God has blessed them with

93. And had God wanted, He would have made you into one community but He leads astray whomsoever He wants and guides whomsoever He wants. And you will certainly be questioned about whatever you are doing.

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intellect to distinguish between guidance and going astray. He has further conclusively communicated through His prophets and messengers that one day each of their followers would be questioned about what they did and then they would be rewarded or punished in accordance with their deeds.

وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوْٓا اَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلًۢا بَيْنَكُمْ فَتَزِلَّ قَدَمٌۢ بَعْدَ ثُبُوْتِهَا وَتَذُوْقُوا السُّوْٓءَ بِمَا صَدَدْتُّمْ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَلَكُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿٩٤﴾[94]

The weapon the Jews used the most to stop people from Islam was their oaths. In the first place, liars because of their psychological weakness swear a lot. In the second, they had no reasoning with which they could argue their case against Islam and Muḥammad (sws). So they had no option but to rely on oaths. By swearing them, they would try to shake the confidence of those who were adamant adherents of Islam and stop those who were becoming inclined to it. The Jews also claimed to be the heirs of the previous religion and prophets. They would use this position and repeatedly swear before people that this new religion and new prophet had no relation with previous religions and prophets. They would claim that if this new prophet was referring to previous religions and prophets, then, God forbid, he was lying.

In the expression تَذُوْقُوا السُّوْٓءَ, the word سُوْء (evil) connotes its consequence: torment. This is because God's torment would be the consequence of their evil deeds.

The Jews are actually warned here and told they were made witnesses to the truth and if they start stopping people from the truth, then its punishment will be very grave too.

وَلَا تَشْتَرُوْا بِعَهْدِ اللّٰهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيْلًا ۭ اِنَّمَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٩٥﴾[95]

The word اِشتراء is discussed both in the explanation of Sūrah al-Baqarah and under verse 77 of Sūrah Āl-i 'Imrān. When the exchange is between goods, as was the case in olden times, then every object is both "a bought item" and "a sold item." For this reason, this word does not mean actually buy something. It refers to bartering things. For this reason, this word is also used to mean "to exchange." Later, it evolved to mean "to give preference to something."

The expression ثَمَنٌ قَلِيْلٌ means "this world and its provisions" and مَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ refers to the hereafter. However much be the quantity of this world's provisions, it is in fact trivial in relation to the Hereafter. This is because it has a very short span and is also

94. And do not make your oaths a means of mutual deception lest a firmly grounded step is undone and you are made to taste the flavour of torment because you stopped [people from] the path of God, and for you is a great punishment.

95. And do not sell God's covenant for a paltry price. Whatever is with God is better for you, if you know.

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temporary whereas the Hereafter is eternal and abiding.

Section IX : Verses (96-105)

In the succeeding verses, first the adversaries of the Prophet (sws) are warned and Muslims who were their targets are urged to show patience and perseverance. They are also given glad tidings of a good fate in the Hereafter. After that, they are directed to adhere to certain practices which will protect them from the incursions of Satan. Certain objections raised by the Jews to disillusion people from the Qur'ān and the Prophet (sws) are then answered. The Quraysh too had fallen suit to this campaign and started blindly repeating these objections.

Text and Translation

مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ بَاقٍ ؕ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ صَبَرُوْٓا اَجْرَهُمْ بِاَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿۹۶﴾
مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ اَوْ اُنْثٰى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً ۚ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ اَجْرَهُمْ بِاَحْسَنِ مَا
كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿۹۷﴾ فَاِذَا قَرَاْتَ الْقُرْاٰنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ الرَّجِيْمِ ﴿۹۸﴾ اِنَّهٗ لَيْسَ لَهٗ سُلْطٰنٌ عَلَى
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَلٰى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُوْنَ ﴿۹۹﴾ اِنَّمَا سُلْطٰنُهٗ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ يَتَوَلَّوْنَهٗ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ بِهٖ مُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿۱۰۰﴾ وَاِذَا بَدَّلْنَآ
اٰيَةً مَّكَانَ اٰيَةٍ ۙ وَّاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُنَزِّلُ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّمَآ اَنْتَ مُفْتَرٍ ؕ بَلْ اَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۱۰۱﴾ قُلْ نَزَّلَهٗ رُوْحُ
الْقُدُسِ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيُثَبِّتَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَهُدًى وَّبُشْرٰى لِلْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿۱۰۲﴾ وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ اَنَّهُمْ
يَقُوْلُوْنَ اِنَّمَا يُعَلِّمُهٗ بَشَرٌ ؕ لِسَانُ الَّذِيْ يُلْحِدُوْنَ اِلَيْهِ اَعْجَمِيٌّ وَّهٰذَا لِسَانٌ عَرَبِيٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿۱۰۳﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ لَا
يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ ۙ لَا يَهْدِيْهِمُ اللّٰهُ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿۱۰۴﴾ اِنَّمَا يَفْتَرِى الْكَذِبَ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ
بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْكٰذِبُوْنَ ﴿۱۰۵﴾

Whatever you have shall finish and whatever is with God shall remain. And We shall give the best reward to those who remain steadfast for what they had been doing. Whoever does a good deed whether a man or a woman, if that person adheres to faith, We shall make that person lead a life of purity and shall reward such people in a good way for what they had being doing. (96-97)

So when you read out the Qur'ān, seek refuge of God from Satan the accursed. He has no power on those who have professed faith and who trust their Lord. And He has power only on those who befriend him and associate partners with their Lord. (98-100)

And when We reveal one verse in place of another – and God knows full well what He reveals – they say: "You are one who fabricates." In fact, most of them do not know have knowledge. Tell them: The Holy Spirit has revealed this from your Lord

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with the truth so that it may keep the believers steadfast and be a guide and a glad tiding for the obedient. (101-102)

And We very well know that these people say: "A person actually teaches him." The language of the person they ascribe this to is non-Arabic and this language is eloquent Arabic. Indeed, God will not make those succeed who do not believe in God's revelations and for them is a painful doom. It is those people who are fabricating lies who are not believing in God's revelations and it is they who are in fact liars. (103-105)

Explanation

مَا عِنْدَكُمْ يَنْفَدُ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ بَاقٍ ؕ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ صَبَرُوْٓا اَجْرَهُمْ بِاَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿۹۶﴾[96]

The first part of this verse warns the adversaries of the Prophet (sws) while the second part gives glad tidings to the believers who were being persecuted in various ways by these adversaries.

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ اَوْ اُنْثٰى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً ۚ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ اَجْرَهُمْ بِاَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿۹۷﴾[97]

This verse elucidates the glad tidings mentioned in the previous *sūrah*.

The life of purity alluded to here is with reference both to this world and the next. Those who adhere to faith and resolve to do righteous deeds undergo trials; devils from among the jinn and humankind try to entangle them into doubts and for this they are actually granted respite. But this respite has a limit. Through this process, the Almighty tests the patience and perseverance of His servants and knows full well the limit of this test. Thus as soon as this limit is reached, the Almighty does not let the devils from among the jinn and humankind to continue with their incursions. On the other hand, after passing through these tests, the faith of the believers continues to get strengthened. The purity in their lives enhances as does their spiritual satisfaction. If they face death in this cause, they willingly welcome it. People devoid of the strength and sweetness of faith cannot comprehend this spiritual bliss of the believers.

Regarding the promise mentioned in the verse, both men and women are specified. Apparently, this specifiying was not needed. However, there is a special reason for this: in those times, just as Muslim men were passing through grave trials in order to remain steadfast on their faith, in a similar way, many women were showing immense courage to save their faith. Also, being the weaker sex, their trial was much harder than that of the opposite gender. Here the Qur'ān by mentioning women specially

96. Whatever you have shall finish and whatever is with God shall remain. And We shall give the best reward to those who remain steadfast for what they had been doing.

97. Whoever does a good deed whether a man or a woman, if that person adheres to faith, We shall make that person lead a life of purity and shall reward such people in a good way for what they had being doing.

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after men has shown affection to them and encouraged them: if they have decided to lead a life of faith and righteous deeds, God will definitely make them lead a pure life. Devils cannot deprive them of this favour. God will not give them this opportunity.

فَاِذَا قَرَاْتَ الْقُرْاٰنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ الرَّجِيْمِ ﴿۹۸﴾[98]

The word قَرَاْتَ here encompasses both personal reading of the Qur'ān as well as reading it out to others for the purpose of inviting them to faith. Thus, in both cases, refuge from the accursed Satan would be sought.

This verse forms a prelude to the objections raised by the Jews against the Qur'ān. The purpose of these objections was to disillusion those who had professed faith in it or were inclined to it. In verses 101-104 ahead, the Qur'ān has answered these objections and before answering them, Muslims are first told in this verse to seek refuge of God from the accursed Satan. They were given this directive because he is in fact the real enemy of the Qur'ān. When the Qur'ān is read and read out, he starts whispering evil suggestions in the minds of people. He calls upon his accomplices among men and jinn to be a part of this malicious campaigns.

This act of seeking refuge is like an amulet against the pranks and mischief worked by such subversive elements. The potent affect of the Qur'ān is dependent on the state of the heart of a person. If a person seeks refuge of God through his tongue only, it does not have much of an influence on him. However, when this supplication comes out from the depth of his heart, he is braced with such force that it gives him support to counter the onslaught of Satan and his accomplices. This onslaught is a consequence of the trial which the Almighty has ordained in this world for human beings. Hence there is no escape from this in any situation. The hidden potential of a person comes to the surface because of this. If a person has the support of the blessing of seeking refuge with the Almighty, he can never be defeated by Satan and his agents.

اِنَّهٗ لَيْسَ لَهٗ سُلْطٰنٌ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَ عَلٰى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُوْنَ ﴿۹۹﴾ اِنَّمَا سُلْطٰنُهٗ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ يَتَوَلَّوْنَهٗ وَ الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ بِهٖ مُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿۱۰۰﴾[99]

This verse further explains the topic under discussion. It actually sounds this assurance that however many new pranks and mischief Satan may play to inveigle people, but a person who wants to protect himself from them can do so. The way to this is to have a strong faith in God and have trust in His graciousness and help in the toughest of circumstances. Only that person is led away by Satan who wants to

98. So when you read out the Qur'ān, seek refuge of God from Satan the accursed.

99. He has no power on those who have professed faith and who trust their Lord. And He has power only on those who befriend him and associate partners with their Lord.

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befriend him and who has some trace of polytheism in him.

وَاِذَا بَدَّلْنَآ اٰيَةً مَّكَانَ اٰيَةٍ ۙ وَّاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُنَزِّلُ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّمَآ اَنْتَ مُفْتَرٍ ۭ بَلْ اَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٠١﴾[100]

The word "verse" here means a directive of the *sharī'ah*.

This is an example of the suggestions the Jews would whisper in the minds of people against the Qur'ān. As can be seen, a change in directive from God about an issue was taken up by them to create doubts. They meant that what was the need for God – the all knowing – to change a directive.

This is a reference to the directives of prohibition and allowance and of the Sabbath which will be referred to ahead in verses 114-116 and 124. When the Qur'ān lifted the prohibition of the Sabbath, and gave directives regarding the dietary laws which were based on the religion of Abraham (sws) instead of that of the Jews and the Idolaters, the Jews started to raise a hue and cry against this. They would contend that this new prophet on the one hand regards their *sharī'ah* to be the *sharī'ah* of God and on the other hand changes its directives with others; if he had been God's messenger, he would never have changed the directives of God; for this reason, he cannot be a messenger of God and is in fact an imposter. This objection was raised by the Jews, but the leaders of the Quraysh started repeating it without even understanding it because they regarded everything said against him to be something that would support their own cause.

The verse goes on to answer this objection: God fully knows the wisdom and expediencies of the directives He reveals but most people do not accept this wisdom.

What is stated here is rather concise. Details are coming up. I am going to refer to some points here so that readers find it easy to understand the coherence and sequence in the discourse.

This answer of the Qur'ān is based on the following two fundamentals:

Firstly, God has revealed his *sharī'ah* in a gradual way so that the believers are able to adhere to it strongly. This gradual way entails a change in directives because of certain circumstances that ensue. The purpose of this change is to provide ease to the believers.

Secondly, this religion is based on the religion of Abraham (sws) whereas the religion of the Jews and the religion of Idolaters are different. Only those things are prohibited in this religion which are prohibited in the religion of Abraham (sws). Originally the religion of the Jews too regarded only these as prohibited; however, they added to this list because of their religious innovations. God kept these intact as a punishment. However, since this religion was founded on that of Abraham's religion,

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100. And when We reveal one verse in place of another – and God knows full well what He reveals – they say: "You are one who fabricates." In fact, most of them do not know have knowledge.

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these additions were done away with.

قُلْ نَزَّلَهٗ رُوْحُ الْقُدُسِ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيُثَبِّتَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَهُدًى وَّبُشْرٰى لِلْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٠٢﴾[101]

The expression رُوْحُ الْقُدُسِ refers to Gabriel, the trustworthy and الحَقُّ refers to the pure and unadulterated religion of God which is free of all interpolations of the Jews, Christians and the Idolaters. It has been revealed to make the believers adhere to faith and protect them from errors and omissions. Here this too must be kept in mind that if there was some change in the religion of God, as indicated earlier, it has been because of a need of the gradual revelation of religion and the purpose was to make people firmly grounded in religion. If the whole religion had been revealed in one go, it would have been very difficult for people to digest it and they would not have been soundly grounded in religious concepts.

Whatever mischief the Prophet's adversaries may play, this Qur'ān will be a guidance in this world and mercy in the Hereafter for those who believe in God and attest to this belief.

وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ اَنَّهُمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ اِنَّمَا يُعَلِّمُهٗ بَشَرٌ ؕ لِسَانُ الَّذِيْ يُلْحِدُوْنَ اِلَيْهِ اَعْجَمِيٌّ وَّهٰذَا لِسَانٌ عَرَبِيٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿١٠٣﴾[102]

Before وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ an incomplete verb is suppressed in accordance with linguistic principles. Ie., وَلَقَدْ كُنَّا نَعْلَمُ. Examples of this usage can be seen in earlier *sūrahs* like al-Baqarah.

This verse refers to another mischief worked by the adversaries of the Prophet (sws) to disillusion people about the Qur'ān. Here no name of the alleged teacher has been referred to. The only thing said is that he is a non-Arab. Qur'ānic exegetes have mentioned more than one name in this regard including that of Salmān Fārisī (rta). God has not felt the need to name the person. Only the objection itself is taken into account and responded to. It is possible that he was intended by those who were raising this criticism. The prelude to the response to criticism is couched in such words that the baselessness of the objection becomes evident. This is because it is concealed in the words وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ that the Almighty is continuously listening to the nonsensical talk of those who are objecting but not taking notice of it because of its baselessness.

This statement has been given by accepting their view as a supposition. The implication is that if these foolish people do not have any appreciation of the Qur'ān's meanings and the truths it is presenting, had they only reflected on the splendour and majesty of its style and the unmatched eloquence of its language they would have seen that none of their poets or orators was able enough to match it let alone non-Arabs. So

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101. Tell them: The Holy Spirit has revealed this from your Lord with the truth so that it may keep the believers steadfast and be a guide and a glad tiding for the obedient.

102. And We very well know that these people say: "A person actually teaches him." The language of the person they ascribe this to is non-Arabic and this language is eloquent Arabic.

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much so, there is a world of difference even between it and the words of the Prophet (sws).

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ ۙ لَا يَهْدِيْهِمُ اللّٰهُ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿۱۰۴﴾[103]

In other words, those who are not prepared to profess faith in God's revelations will be never be worthy of God's guidance.

اِنَّمَا يَفْتَرِى الْكَذِبَ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْكٰذِبُوْنَ ﴿۱۰۵﴾[104]

Earlier in verse 101, it has been referred to that these people would regard the Prophet (sws) to be an imposter. This verse answers this criticism.

Section X : Verses (106-111)

This section of verses is directed at the Muslims who were being persecuted for their religion by the enemies of the truth. They are addressed and assured, and at the same time those who may back away from Islam being overawed by the adversaries are warned of God's punishment. In this regard, Muslims who had to migrate to protect themselves from the oppression of the adversaries of the truth are praised and given glad tidings of forgiveness and God's pleasure.

Readers may now proceed to study the verses.

Text and Translation

مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللّٰهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اِيْمَانِهٖٓ اِلَّا مَنْ اُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهٗ مُطْمَئِنٌّۢ بِالْاِيْمَانِ وَلٰكِنْ مَّنْ شَرَحَ بِالْكُفْرِ صَدْرًا فَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿۱۰۶﴾ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمُ اسْتَحَبُّوا الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا عَلَى الْاٰخِرَةِ ۙ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِى الْقَوْمَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿۱۰۷﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ طَبَعَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ وَسَمْعِهِمْ وَاَبْصَارِهِمْ ۚ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْغٰفِلُوْنَ ﴿۱۰۸﴾ لَا جَرَمَ اَنَّهُمْ فِى الْاٰخِرَةِ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿۱۰۹﴾ ثُمَّ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ لِلَّذِيْنَ هَاجَرُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا فُتِنُوْا ثُمَّ جٰهَدُوْا وَصَبَرُوْٓا ۙ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهَا لَغَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿۱۱۰﴾ يَوْمَ تَاْتِىْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ تُجَادِلُ عَنْ نَّفْسِهَا وَتُوَفّٰى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۱۱۱﴾

He who disbelieves in God after believing except if he is compelled and his heart

103. Indeed, God will not make those succeed who do not believe in God's revelations and for them is a painful doom.

104. It is those people who are fabricating lies who are not believing in God's revelations and it is they who are in fact liars.

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adheres to belief, but those who open their chests to disbelief, the wrath of God is on them and they shall be sternly punished. This is because they gave preference to this world over the Hereafter and God does not guide disbelievers. It is these people on whose hearts, ears and eyes God has set a seal and it is they who are negligent of the Hereafter. Surely, it is these people who shall be the losers in the Hereafter. (106-109)

Those who migrated after they had been put into trials, then undertook *jihād* and showed steadfastness, then after this, your Lord undoubtedly is most Forgiving and Ever-Merciful. On the day, when each person will come speaking in his defence and each person will get exactly what he had done and not the slightest injustice shall he suffer. (110-111)

Explanation

مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللّٰهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اِيْمَانِهٖٓ اِلَّا مَنْ اُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهٗ مُطْمَىِٕنٌّۢ بِالْاِيْمَانِ وَلٰكِنْ مَّنْ شَرَحَ بِالْكُفْرِ صَدْرًا فَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾[105]

This verse addresses those who in those times were being persecuted by the disbelievers. It is said that if such people say something from their tongues that may bring them out of this hardship but at the same time their hearts deeply adhere to faith, then they have this opportunity. But they cannot use this as an excuse to open their hearts to disbelief. If they do this, they will face God's wrath and a great punishment. Their acceptance of faith has shown that the truth had become fully evident to them. After this, there is a possibility that a person may do something to protect his faith which may be counterproductive; however, there is no possibility that a person should totally forsake faith and fully adopt disbelief.

ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمُ اسْتَحَبُّوا الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا عَلَى الْاٰخِرَةِ ۙ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِى الْقَوْمَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿١٠٧﴾[106]

The implication of this verse is that God guides only those who make guidance their objective, come what may. However, He does not guide those who being overwhelmed by hardships seek refuge in disbelief.

اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ طَبَعَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ وَسَمْعِهِمْ وَاَبْصَارِهِمْ ۚ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْغٰفِلُوْنَ ﴿١٠٨﴾[107]

Such people as mentioned in this verse are neither able to reflect on the reality nor

105. He who disbelieves in God after believing except if he is compelled and his heart adheres to belief, but those who open their chests to disbelief, the wrath of God is on them and they shall be sternly punished.

106. This is because they gave preference to this world over the Hereafter and God does not guide disbelievers.

107. It is these people on whose hearts, ears and eyes God has set a seal and it is they who are negligent of the Hereafter.

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want to hear any sane voice nor are prepared to open their eyes to gain insight. The verse actually refers to the established practice of God about providing guidance. I have already alluded to it under verse 7 of Sūrah al-Baqarah.

لَا جَرَمَ اَنَّهُمْ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿١٠٩﴾[108]

The expression لَا جَرَمَ means لابد and محالة لا and is meant to emphasize something. Yet in in certain contexts and occasions carry the same stress as oaths do.

This verse states the obvious consequence of what is stated in earlier verses.

ثُمَّ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ لِلَّذِيْنَ هَاجَرُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا فُتِنُوْا ثُمَّ جٰهَدُوْا وَصَبَرُوْٓا ۙ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهَا لَغَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١١٠﴾[109]

After referring to the fate of the coward, the valiant are mentioned. Migration here refers to the migration towards Abyssinia. *Jihād* here alludes to the brave attitude they adopted to remain steadfast on religion.

يَوْمَ تَاْتِيْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ تُجَادِلُ عَنْ نَّفْسِهَا وَتُوَفّٰى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١١١﴾[110]

This is a reminder of the certainty of the Day of Judgement when people will face God and their matter would be justly decided by Him.

Section XI : Verses (112-124)

In the succeeding verses, the example of a settlement is cited in order to warn the Quraysh. If they do not change their attitude, they too will meet the fate as the one met by the settlement dwellers. Moreover, they are guided not to make things allowed or proscribed on the basis of their own desires. They should eat and consume the things God has allowed for them and not regard them as prohibited on the basis of their polytheistic superstitions. In this regard, it is also clarified that only those things were regarded as prohibited for the Jews which were regarded so in the religion of Abraham (sws) but they made certain things prohibited for their own selves because of their rebelliousness; they now ascribe this prohibition to the religion of Abraham (sws) where as he neither had anything to do with Judaism nor with Christianity nor with the religion of the Idolaters. His religion was distinct from all of them and the Prophet (sws) has been directed to follow it. The observance of the Sabbath too

108. Surely, it is these people who shall be the losers in the Hereafter.

109. Those who migrated after they had been put into trials, then undertook *jihād* and showed steadfastness, then after this, your Lord undoubtedly is most Forgiving and Ever-Merciful.

110. On the day, when each person will come speaking in his defence and each person will get exactly what he had done and not the slightest injustice shall he suffer.

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related with the Jews and had nothing to do with the religion of Abraham (sws).

Readers may now proceed to study these verses:

Text and Translation

وَضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا قَرْيَةً كَانَتْ اٰمِنَةً مُّطْمَئِنَّةً يَّاْتِيْهَا رِزْقُهَا رَغَدًا مِّنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ فَكَفَرَتْ بِاَنْعُمِ اللّٰهِ فَاَذَاقَهَا اللّٰهُ
لِبَاسَ الْجُوْعِ وَالْخَوْفِ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَصْنَعُوْنَ ﴿١١٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ جَآءَهُمْ رَسُوْلٌ مِّنْهُمْ فَكَذَّبُوْهُ فَاَخَذَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَهُمْ
ظٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿١١٣﴾ فَكُلُوْا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللّٰهُ حَلٰلًا طَيِّبًا ۖ وَّاشْكُرُوْا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ اِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿١١٤﴾ اِنَّمَا
حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنْزِيْرِ وَمَآ اُهِلَّ لِغَيْرِ اللّٰهِ بِهٖ ۚ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَّلَا عَادٍ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ
رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾ وَلَا تَقُوْلُوْا لِمَا تَصِفُ اَلْسِنَتُكُمُ الْكَذِبَ هٰذَا حَلٰلٌ وَّهٰذَا حَرَامٌ لِّتَفْتَرُوْا عَلَى اللّٰهِ الْكَذِبَ ۭ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ
يَفْتَرُوْنَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ الْكَذِبَ لَا يُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿١١٦﴾ مَتَاعٌ قَلِيْلٌ ۖ وَّلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَعَلَى الَّذِيْنَ هَادُوْا
حَرَّمْنَا مَا قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ وَمَا ظَلَمْنٰهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ كَانُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿١١٨﴾ ثُمَّ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ لِلَّذِيْنَ
عَمِلُوا السُّوْۗءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ذٰلِكَ وَاَصْلَحُوْٓا ۙ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهَا لَغَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١١٩﴾ اِنَّ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ
كَانَ اُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِّلّٰهِ حَنِيْفًا ۭ وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ ۙ شَاكِرًا لِّاَنْعُمِهٖ ۭ اِجْتَبٰىهُ وَهَدٰىهُ اِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿١٢١﴾
وَاٰتَيْنٰهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً ۭ وَاِنَّهٗ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ ثُمَّ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ اَنِ اتَّبِعْ مِلَّةَ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ حَنِيْفًا ۭ وَ
مَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ اِنَّمَا جُعِلَ السَّبْتُ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ اخْتَلَفُوْا فِيْهِ ۭ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَيَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ
فِيْمَا كَانُوْا فِيْهِ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿١٢٤﴾

And God has cited the example of a settlement which was in peace and contentment. Its sustenance was reaching it with abundance from all sides. But it showed ingratitude to God's favours. So, God made it taste the flavour of hunger because of its misdeeds and made it wear the apparel of fear. And a messenger came to them from among themselves; so, they rejected him. Thereby, a torment seized them and they were the ones who were unjust to their own selves. (112-113)

So, eat of the permissible and pure things that God has given you and be thankful to God's favours, if you in fact only worship Him. He has only prohibited to you carrion, blood, pork and that on which the name of someone other than Him is invoked. Yet, he who is driven by necessity intending neither to be desirous nor to transgress, then God is Forgiving and Ever-Merciful. And on the basis of the lie that your tongues fabricate, do not say: "This is allowed and this is prohibited," so that you impute falsehood to God. Those who impute falsehood to God shall never succeed. For them

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is a luxury of a few days and a painful doom. (114-117)

And those who are Jews, We also prohibited the same things to them which We have informed you of earlier and We have not been unjust to them; rather they have continued to be unjust to their own selves. (118)

As for those who commit a sin while being overcome by emotions and afterwards repent and correct themselves, then after this your Lord undoubtedly is very Gracious and Ever-Merciful. (119)

Indeed, Abraham was an *ummah* in his own self, obedient to God and devoted and he was not from among the polytheists. He was grateful to His favours. God chose him and had guided him towards a straight path. And We granted him goodness in this world also and in the Hereafter as well he shall be from among the righteous. Then We sent this revelation to you: follow the way of Abraham who was fully devoted and was not among the polytheists. (120-123)

The Sabbath was imposed only on those who created differences in it. And your Lord shall indeed decide between them on the Day of Judgement in what they have been differing. (124)

Explanation

ضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا قَرْيَةً كَانَتْ اٰمِنَةً مُّطْمَئِنَّةً يَّاْتِيْهَا رِزْقُهَا رَغَدًا مِّنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ فَكَفَرَتْ بِاَنْعُمِ اللّٰهِ فَاَذَاقَهَا اللّٰهُ لِبَاسَ الْجُوْعِ وَالْخَوْفِ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَصْنَعُوْنَ ﴿۱۱۲﴾[111]

The word قَرْيَةً refers to a central settlement which has its own ancillaries. Though it is not named, concomitant indications show that it refers to Sabā. At a number of instances in the Qur'an, the example of this settlement is cited before the people of Makkah. Thus, for example, verses 15-20 of Sūrah Sabā discuss it. This city was immensely blessed by God. It had rows of trees and orchards on both sides of its pathways; it had a canal and fountains too but its inhabitants were ungrateful to God. As a consequence, the punishment of God appeared in the form of a great flood and utterly destroyed everyone.

Consider the sentence: فَاَذَاقَهَا اللّٰهُ لِبَاسَ الْجُوْعِ وَالْخَوْفِ. Some of its parts are suppressed in accordance with linguistic principles. If they are revealed, the whole discourse will be to the effect: فَاَذَاقَهَا اللّٰهُ طَعْمَ الْجُوْعِ وَاَلْبَسَهَا لِبَاسَ الْخَوْفِ. In other words, God made them taste the flavour of hunger because of their misdeeds and made them wear the apparel of fear instead of that of peace.

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111. And God has cited the example of a settlement which was in peace and contentment. Its sustenance was reaching it with abundance from all sides. But it showed ingratitude to God's favours. So, God made it taste the flavour of hunger because of its misdeeds and made it wear the apparel of fear.

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وَلَقَدْ جَآءَهُمْ رَسُوْلٌ مِّنْهُمْ فَكَذَّبُوْهُ فَاَخَذَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَهُمْ ظٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿۱۱۳﴾[112]

Their destruction referred to in the verse was because of their own ingratitude.

فَكُلُوْا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللّٰهُ حَلٰلًا طَيِّبًا ۖ وَّاشْكُرُوْا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ اِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿۱۱۴﴾[113]

By reminding the people of Makkah of the fate of the people of Sabā, they are told that they too should consume of God's pure and wholesome things and thank Him for His favours if they truly worship Him. It may be kept in mind here that there was great similarity between the people of Makkah and those of Sabā. If we read what is said earlier about the latter and compare it with what is said in verse 57 of Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ[114] in praise of the former, this similarity becomes evident. Just as the people of Sabā lived in peace and comfort, the people of Makkah too led similar lives. Because this city had the house of God in it, it was blessed with peace and tranquillity. No one could dare attack this sacred city. Trade caravans would come to it from all over the country without feeling any danger or threat and would becomes a means of its development and prosperity. Even the caravans of the people of Makkah would travel far and wide in every season without any threat or danger. They were actually provided with protection by the Bedouin tribes to show them the way let alone any harm being inflicted on them. This was purely because they were custodians of the House of God. The obligation they owed to these favours was to be grateful to God for blessing them with them. On the contrary, they got incriminated with polytheism and sacrificed the animals given to them by God at the altars of their idols and deities; under their superstitious beliefs, they became the final authority in regarding them to be permissible or prohibited. In this way, they became guilty of the sin of ingratitude like the people of Sabā and reached a similar fate.

To understand the real meaning of "if you in fact only worship Him," it should be kept in mind that in spite of getting entangled in all types of evil practices of polytheism, they still claimed that they only worshipped God. They said that their idols were the near and favoured ones of God. If they were pleased, then they could intercede with God and procure for the Quraysh anything they wanted. It was because of this notion that they presented offerings to them and would dedicate animals to them. Those animals were regarded as sacred such that neither was their meat and milk allowed to be consumed nor could they be used as a means of transport. The

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112. And a messenger came to them from among themselves; so, they rejected him. Thereby, a torment seized them and they were the ones who were unjust to their own selves.

113. So, eat of the permissible and pure things that God has given you and be thankful to God's favours, if you in fact only worship Him.

114. اَوَلَمْ نُمَكِّنْ لَّهُمْ حَرَمًا اٰمِنًا يُّجْبٰٓى اِلَيْهِ ثَمَرٰتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ رِّزْقًا مِّنْ لَّدُنَّا وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ (did We not firmly plant them in a safe sanctuary towards which the produce of everything is being drawn to? But most of them do not know this.)

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Qur'ān has dispelled this misconception here: if they claim to be worshippers of God alone, then only He should be thanked for the favours He has provided. They should neither ascribe these favours to others nor present offerings to them and also not regard what is lawful and what is not because of them.

اِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنْزِيْرِ وَمَآ اُهِلَّ لِغَيْرِ اللّٰهِ بِهٖ ۚ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَّلَا عَادٍ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾ [115]

The condition mentioned in this verse refers to the fact that a person should not take undue advantage of compelling circumstances and lavishly start consuming what is prohibited. Readers can look up more details of this aspect under verse 3 of Sūrah al-Mā'idah and verse 145 of Sūrah al-An'ām.

وَلَا تَقُوْلُوْا لِمَا تَصِفُ اَلْسِنَتُكُمُ الْكَذِبَ هٰذَا حَلٰلٌ وَّهٰذَا حَرَامٌ لِّتَفْتَرُوْا عَلَى اللّٰهِ الْكَذِبَ ۭ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَفْتَرُوْنَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ الْكَذِبَ لَا يُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿١١٦﴾ [116]

The words وَلَا تَقُوْلُوْا لِمَا تَصِفُ اَلْسِنَتُكُمُ الْكَذِبَ imply that they only have baseless claims about these things and do not have any solid proof from God.

The words وَ لَا تَقُوْلُوْا لِمَا تَصِفُ اَلْسِنَتُكُمُ الْكَذِبَ imply that regarding something to be permissible or prohibited out of one's own desire is not an ordinary thing. It finally culminates in imputing falsehood to God, which is a heinous crime.

مَتَاعٌ قَلِيْلٌ ۠ وَّلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿١١٧﴾ [117]

This verse is an explanation of لَا يُفْلِحُوْنَ of the previous verse. In other words, those who impute falsehood to God only have the transient life of this world and its peace and comfort. After that, they will undergo a painful punishment until eternity.

وَعَلَى الَّذِيْنَ هَادُوْا حَرَّمْنَا مَا قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ وَمَا ظَلَمْنٰهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ كَانُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿١١٨﴾ [118]

The verse implies that originally the same things were prohibited to the Jews as the ones spelled out in verse 115. Then they prohibited some more things on themselves out of their own desire. As a result, God made these things prohibited to them as a

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115. He has only prohibited to you carrion, blood, pork and that on which the name of someone other than Him is invoked. Yet, he who is driven by necessity intending neither to be desirous nor to transgress, then God is Forgiving and Ever-Merciful.

116. And on the basis of the lie that your tongues fabricate, do not say: "This is allowed and this is prohibited," so that you impute falsehood to God. Those who impute falsehood to God shall never succeed.

117. For them is a luxury of a few days and a painful doom.

118. And those who are Jews, We also prohibited the same things to them which We have informed you of earlier and We have not been unjust to them; rather they have continued to be unjust to their own selves.

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punishment of this rebelliousness. God was never unjust to them; rather they themselves were responsible for this injustice. This has been explained under verse 160 of Sūrah al-Nisā'. Readers may look it up.

ثُمَّ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ لِلَّذِيْنَ عَمِلُوا السُّوْٓءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ذٰلِكَ وَاَصْلَحُوْٓا ۙ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهَا لَغَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿۱۱۹﴾[119]

After the warnings sounded in the previous verses, this verse gives glad tidings by addressing the Prophet (sws): those who have remained entangled in the biases of their mistakes and ignorance still have a chance to salvage themselves. His Lord will forgive people who sinned because of ignorance and then repented and reformed themselves. The implication is that in the period before his arrival if people disobeyed God and then repented and mended their affairs, they still have a chance to earn God's mercy and forgiveness. Unfortunate are the people who do not benefit from this opportunity.

اِنَّ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ كَانَ اُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِّلّٰهِ حَنِيْفًا ۭ وَلَمْ يَكُ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿۱۲۰﴾[120]

To support their religious innovations, the Jews, the Christians and the Idolaters would ascribe them to Abraham (sws). Each of these groups would claim that it is following his ways and obeying his directives regarding what is permissible and what is prohibited. The Christians, who had made the swine as permissible, claimed that they were only following Abraham (sws). As for the Idolaters, they had gone even farther. They regarded themselves to be the sole heirs of Abraham's religion; instead of evaluating their own selves, they had the audacity to blame the Prophet (sws) they he had deviated from the way of Abraham (sws) and not following his directives regarding what is permissible and what is prohibited and was in fact treading on his own unique way. This verse has responded to all these objections by saying that Abraham (sws) was an *ummah* (community) in his own right, obedient to God and devoted to Him and he was not from among the the Idolaters. In verse 67 of Sūrah Āl-i 'Imrān, the words used are: مَا كَانَ اِبْرٰهِيْمُ يَهُوْدِيًّا وَّلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَّلٰكِنْ كَانَ حَنِيْفًا مُّسْلِمًا (Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian; in fact, he was a devoted Muslim).

The word *ummah*, on the one hand, expresses the unique stature of Abraham (sws) implying he did not belong to any of these three communities and was a devoted Muslim distinct from them. On the other hand, it also points to the comprehensive and central position blessed to him by God because he was not just an individual, he was the founder of an *ummah.*

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119. As for those who commit a sin while being overcome by emotions and afterwards repent and correct themselves, then after this your Lord undoubtedly is very Gracious and Ever-Merciful.

120. Indeed, Abraham was an *ummah* in his own self, obedient to God and devoted and he was not from among the polytheists.

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شَاكِرًا لِّاَنْعُمِهٖ ؕ اِجْتَبٰىهُ وَهَدٰىهُ اِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿۱۲۱﴾[121]

The verse praises the grateful nature of Abraham (sws). The implication is that he was not like the Idolaters who ascribed all their favours to idols and in this way were ungrateful to God. It was because of this grateful attitude of theirs that God chose him to be a prophet and guided him to a straight path.

وَاٰتَيْنٰهُ فِى الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً ؕ وَاِنَّهٗ فِى الْاٰخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿۱۲۲﴾[122]

The implication was that in this world too, Abraham (sws) was granted a position of authority so that he virtually became a ruler and in the hereafter too he would attain a great status.

ثُمَّ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ اَنِ اتَّبِعْ مِلَّةَ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ حَنِيْفًا ؕ وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿۱۲۳﴾[123]

The implication of this verse is that all these Jews, Christians and Idolaters who claim to be followers of Abraham's (sws) religion are absolute liars. However, the Prophet (sws) must follow the religion of Abraham (sws). Thus his way is the way of Abraham (sws).

اِنَّمَا جُعِلَ السَّبْتُ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ اخْتَلَفُوْا فِيْهِ ؕ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَيَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ فِيْمَا كَانُوْا فِيْهِ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿۱۲۴﴾[124]

This is the answer to an objection raised by the Jews on the Prophet (sws). They alleged that he did not respect the Sabbath. The Qur'ān has responded to this by saying that respecting the Sabbath is not any part of Abraham's (sws) religion. It related to the Jews solely and they too violated its sanctity by creating differences in it. Now these differences will be settled on the Day of Judgement. The differences they had among themselves regarding the Sabbath are very extensive in their detail and citing them is beyond the scope of this exegesis.

Section XII: Verses (125-128)

This is the closing section of the *sūrah*. The Prophet (sws) and the Muslims are

121. He was grateful to His favours. God chose him and had guided him towards a straight path.

122. And We granted him goodness in this world also and in the Hereafter as well he shall be from among the righteous.

123. Then We sent this revelation to you: follow the way of Abraham who was fully devoted and was not among the polytheists.

124. The Sabbath was imposed only on those who created differences in it. And your Lord shall indeed decide between them on the Day of Judgement in what they have been differing.

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directed to adhere to God's religion and be steadfast in facing hardships that come their way. At the same time, the way to acquire patience is delineated and glad tidings are given to them that God's affection and companionship is reserved for the righteous and it is they who will succeed in the Hereafter.

Readers may proceed to study the verses.

Text and Translation

اُدْعُ اِلٰى سَبِيْلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ اَحْسَنُ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيْلِهٖ وَهُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِيْنَ ﴿۱۲۵﴾ وَاِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوْا بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوْقِبْتُمْ بِهٖ ؕ وَلَئِنْ صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِّلصّٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿۱۲۶﴾ وَاصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ اِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُ فِيْ ضَيْقٍ مِّمَّا يَمْكُرُوْنَ ﴿۱۲۷﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا وَّالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ مُّحْسِنُوْنَ ﴿۱۲۸﴾

Call to the path of your Lord with wisdom and with sound advice and debate with them in a refined manner. Indeed your Lord knows full well who has drifted from His path and also knows very well those also who are guided. If you seek revenge, only seek it in proportion with what you have been inflicted with and if you show patience, then this is a lot better for those who show patience. And show patience and you can acquire patience only through a relationship with God. And do not grieve on them and do not fret over the schemes they are plotting. Indeed, God is with those who adhered to piety and those who are thorough in their deeds. (125-128)

Explanation

اُدْعُ اِلٰى سَبِيْلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ اَحْسَنُ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيْلِهٖ وَهُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِيْنَ ﴿۱۲۵﴾[125]

This verse addresses the Prophet (sws) and through him his companions.

The word الْحِكْمَةِ here means arguments and proofs and الْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ means reminding the addressees in an affectionate way. These are the two principles that are the foundations of preaching. Whatever a person utters should be based on reasoning and he should be very affectionate and sincere in his conversation and not force and impose his view on others. This style expresses his sympathy for the addressee and inclines the latter's heart to hear the words of his well-wisher. Nonetheless, the stubborn do not budge even after this affection; yet this is the correct way.

This directive was needed because the attitude of the Prophet's adversaries had

125. Call to the path of your Lord with wisdom and with sound advice and debate with them in refined manner. Indeed your Lord knows full well who has drifted from His path and also knows very well those also who are guided.

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become very antagonizing and they now had to reckon with his companions who were organized as a group. In such circumstances, it was possible that these companions adopt a very aggressive attitude in return and this could negatively affect the message of the Prophet (sws). Thus in order to protect it from any untoward outcome, this directive was given.

The Prophet (sws) and his companions are further directed to debate and argue with their addressees in a refined way. If they adopt a provocative and aggressive attitude, the companions should not retaliate even more aggressively; they should adopt a polite attitude. In verse 53 of Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl, it has been explained thus: وَقُلْ لِّعِبَادِيْ يَقُوْلُوا الَّتِيْ هِيَ اَحْسَنُ ۭ اِنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ يَنْزَغُ بَيْنَهُمْ ۭ اِنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ كَانَ لِلْاِنْسَانِ عَدُوًّا مُّبِيْنًا.[126]

The sentence اِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيْلِهٖ وَ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِيْنَ urges the Prophet (sws) to consign the matter to God in these circumstances. He knows both the guided and those who have gone astray. He will deal with each in the manner he deserves. The responsibility of a preacher is to just convey his message. If he has fulfilled this responsibility, he has done what was required of him. The rest is God's domain.

وَاِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوْا بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوْقِبْتُمْ بِهٖ ۭ وَلَىِٕنْ صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِّلصّٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿۱۲۶﴾[127]

The style adopted in the expression فَعَاقِبُوْا بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوْقِبْتُمْ بِهٖ is similar to that of دِنَّاهُمْ كَمَا دَانُوْا (we paid them back in the same coins), the words كَمَا دَانُوْا obviously mean كَمَا فَعَلُوْا but merely for the sake of *mujānasah* (similarity of words), the expression كَمَا دَانُوْا are used instead of كَمَا فَعَلُوْا. In other words, retaliation should be equal to the harm inflicted. It should never exceed it. Moreover, abstaining from prohibited things must be observed by a person in this retaliation in all circumstances. If a person's adversary abuses him, he should not abuse him in return. The retaliation must never be against good conduct and morality.

The verse goes on to say that since this stage of the Prophet's preaching mission is very precarious and not every one can observe its limits, and if these limits are crossed then it will harm the objectives of this mission, it is better if patience is exercised. The fruits of patience are immense and cannot be found if one undertakes retaliation.

It may be kept in mind that these directives were given at the time when Muslims were targets of oppression and injustice at the hands of their opponents. They do not relate to the period when a formal state of the Muslims had been formed. The sphere of authority of such a state is entirely different. Its details have been discussed in the previous *sūrahs*, in particular, Sūrah al-Anfāl. More details are coming up in the Madīnan *sūrahs* ahead.

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126. And tell My servants: Say only that which is better. Indeed, Satan keeps implanting evil suggestions among them. Indeed, Satan is an open enemy of human beings.

127. If you people seek revenge, only seek it in proportion with what you have been inflicted with and if you show patience, then this is a lot better for those who show patience.

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وَاصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ اِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُ فِيْ ضَيْقٍ مِّمَّا يَمْكُرُوْنَ ﴿١٢٧﴾[128]

Though in the literal sense the verse addresses the Prophet (sws), yet in reality the companions too are addressed, as was pointed out in the previous verse. It is as if through his person, all Muslims are being guided. The verse not only directs them to show patience, it also gives them a strategy: this patience cannot be attained without a strong relationship with God and the way that leads to this relationship is to keep Him in remembrance. The best form of this is the ritual or prayer. It is for this reason that at other instances, diligence in the prayer, in particular the *tahajjud* one, is mentioned together with the directive of exercising patience.

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا وَّالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ مُّحْسِنُوْنَ ﴿١٢٨﴾[129]

This verse promises God's help and gives glad tidings of the victory of Islam and the Muslims in the end. The word مُّحْسِنُوْنَ refers to people who worship and obey God in such a way as if they are seeing Him. It is such people who have God's companionship and, as a result, it is they who will triumph in the hereafter.

We now come to the end of this *sūrah*'s exegesis.

وَاٰخِرُ دَعْوٰىهُمْ اَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ (and our last prayer is that gratitude be to God, Lord of the world)

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128. And show patience and you can acquire patience only through a relationship with God. And do not grieve on them and do not fret over the schemes they are plotting.

129. Indeed, God is with those who adhered to piety and those who are thorough in their deeds.

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Tadabbur e Qur'an

17 Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl

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Sūrah Banī Isrā’īl

Theme and Relationship with Previous Sūrah

This *sūrah* is the counterpart of Sūrah al-Naḥl, the previous *sūrah*. For this reason, there is no basic difference in the theme of both. The only difference is that what is stated rather concisely in the first *sūrah* is comprehensively explained in the second one. For example:

In Sūrah al-Naḥl, warning is sounded to both the Idolaters of Arabia and to the Israelites, but for the latter this warning is only in the form of insinuations. However, in this *sūrah* they are addressed in detail in the light of their history and informed that their arrogant notion of being the favourite and chosen people of God is mere self-deception. Their own history bears witness that whenever they rebelled against God, they were severely punished. They were worthy of God’s mercy only when they repented and reformed themselves. So, now if they want be secure from God’s wrath, they must follow this prophet who is calling them to the same straight path as had been made evident to them by the Torah. Simultaneously, by referring to the incident of *mi‘rāj* (ascension) both the Idolaters of Arabia and the Israelites are informed that the custodianship of the mosque of Ka‘bah and the mosque of Aqṣā entrusted to them will confiscated from them because they have embezzled this trust. God has now decided to entrust their custodianship to this unlettered prophet. So those who want to change their attitude should change it; else be prepared to face the consequences of their rebellious behaviour.

The Qur’ān is calling them to the natural and straight path of life. In the previous *sūrah*, only its foundations were alluded to. Among the things that must be adhered to, justice, goodness and owing one’s obligations to one’s relatives were alluded to. Among those things that must be abstained from, vulgarity, evil and rebellious were pointed out. In this *sūrah*, their details are referred to. Evident from these details is their correspondence with the ten commandments of the Torah. In other words, human nature and ancient divine teachings are in harmony with one another. For this reason, if the Quraysh rebel against this, they will be punished and if the Israelites conspire against this, they too will earn the curse of God.

In the previous *sūrah*, migration is mentioned in a passing way. In this *sūrah*, it is mentioned very clearly and the Prophet (sws) and his companions are directed to prepare for it. It is evident from the way in which these directions are given that its time is near. It can thus be deduced that this *sūrah* was revealed near the time of

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migration.

Analysis of the Sūrah

Verse (1): By referring to the incident of *mi'rāj* (ascension), it is shown that the custodianship of the mosque of Ka'bah and the mosque of Aqṣā entrusted to them has been confiscated from them because they have embezzled this trust. Their custodianship has been handed over to the Prophet (sws).

Verses (2-8): The notion of the Israelites that they are God's favourites and chosen people and hence solely entitled to the religious leadership of the world is negated. In these verses, they are told that they had been informed by their prophets that they would twice rebel against God and spread anarchy in the land. On both occasions, they will be severely taken to task. Thus their history bears witness that first they were beaten up at the hands of the Chaldeans and then by the Romans. They were released from the yokes of the Chaldeans when they reformed themselves. Thus if they want to become worthy of God's mercy again, they must reform themselves. This unlettered prophet has opened the way of repentance and reformation for them. If they want to remain secure from punishment, they must accept his invitation and share his blessings. If out jealousy they deny him and arrogantly regard themselves to be the favourite and chosen people, they should remember that God will once again have them beaten up the way they were earlier.

Verses (9-21): Both the Idolaters of the Quraysh and the Israelites are invited to profess faith in the Qur'ān. This Qur'ān is guiding them to the path of human nature which was shown to them by previous prophets and their scriptures. Glad tidings are for those who accept it and destruction for those reject it. Sorrow is expressed at those who instead of accepting this call demand miracles and signs punishment. Alas they do not care to see the signs that are spread all around them and which are also alluded to in this book. They rely on their alleged deities whereas no soul shall bear the burden of another. It is God's way that He does not punish people without warning and admonishing them. Now they have been completely warned. If they do not benefit from this warning, then God's torment will visit them. The established practice of God regarding His punishment is explained.

Verses (22-29): Details of the straight path to which the Qur'ān is calling them and which was alluded to in verse 90 of the previous *sūrah* are cited. These details show that the ten commandments of the Torah and these teachings of the Qur'ān are in complete harmony and they are in exact accord with human nature. Without this, no upright society can come into existence. Hence, there is no way for either the Israelites or the Ishmaelites to escape from them. From Abraham (sws) to Moses (sws) and Jesus (sws) – all prophets of God have called people to these things.

Verses (40-52): The real reason for the aversion of the Idolaters of the Quraysh is alluded to: they do not want to profess faith in monotheism and belief in the Hereafter. Hence when the Qur'ān is recited out to them, they run away and make fun of the

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Prophet (sws). The fact is that both these beliefs have been reasoned out so clearly that no sane person can reject them.

Verses (53-55): These three verses address the Prophet (sws) from within the ongoing discourse. He is told to direct his companions that in this heated period of preaching, in their zeal for communicating the truth, they should not say something which may further fuel the sentiments of their rivals and Satan gets a chance to spread his mischief. At the same time, the Prophet (sws) is sounded assurance that his obligation is to only preach. Forcibly making people accept Islam is not his duty. It is God Who gives a person the urge to accept faith and it is He Who deprives whomsoever He wants to. In verse 55, it is explained that God has made all his prophets superior to others in some aspect or the other. Hence, the issue of absolute superiority should not be raised for it may become a cause of trial for people.

Verses (56-57): Verses 53-55 which addressed the Prophet (sws) formed a parenthetical sentence. As soon as they finished, the topic of monotheism that was under discussion is brought to a completion. The Idolaters regarded the angels to be the associates of God. About them, it is said that they themselves continuously strive for the nearness of God and to please Him and at all times are in awe of His punishment, let alone being regarded as His associates.

Verses (58-60): The demand of the Prophet's enemies that they be shown the torment of God is answered and the established practice of God in this regard is cited.

Verses (61-65): The real reason for the aversion and denial of the disbelievers is alluded to: instead of being grateful to God on His favours, they took to disbelief and because arrogant. In this matter, they followed Satan exactly and Satan's thought about them was made to come true by him.

Verses (66-72): A parable is cited that depicts the arrogance of a person once he is blessed with favours. After that, the fate of those who lead their lives with open eyes and those who wonder about with eyes shut is alluded to.

Verses (73-77): The Prophet (sws) is directed to fully adhere to his preaching endeavour of calling people to the truth in spite of the opposition he is facing. It is declared that if the Quraysh turn him out from this land, then they too will not be able to reside in it for long. After that, the practice of God regarding migration of a prophet (sws) is explained.

Verses (78-81): It is emphasized on the Prophet (sws) to be patient and steadfast in his duty by being diligent and vigilant in the prayer. It is indicated that the time of migration is near. He is directed to supplicate for it. Glad tidings are then given of dominance of the truth in spite of the existing circumstances.

Verses (82-89): Sorrow is expressed on the misfortune of the Prophet's rivals for not valuing a great favour of God as the Qur'ān. The fact is that it is a cure and mercy for them. If all of mankind and jinnkind together try to author such a Book, they would not be able to. Then in a passing way, an objection about divine revelation and Gabriel raised by the Prophet's rivals is cited and answered.

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Verses (90-100): The demand of the disbelievers to show certain miracles is alluded and wisely responded to. The arrogant among the Quraysh are warned that they are not the sole owners of God's treasures and thus have no right to think that they are the sole recipients of propethood. This is God's favour and He has given it to whomsoever He wanted.

Verses (101-104): The nine miracles worked by Moses (sws) are referred to. The fate of the Pharaoh's rebelliousness in spite of witnessing these miracles is alluded to.

Verses (105-111): This is the concluding section of the *sūrah*. It is asserted that the Qur'ān is truth in entirety. The responsibility of the messenger is only to deliver glad tidings and to warn people. If the Qur'ān is being revealed gradually, then it is because this is the requisite of its teaching. The Prophet (sws) should leave to themselves the wretched who are not professing faith. Only those people are professing faith who have the light of knowledge within them. Allāh and Raḥmān are God's names. The Prophet (sws) should not go after those who discriminate between these names and make them a cause of objection. The spirit of this religion is moderation and he should adhere to moderation in his worship and remain engaged in extolling and glorifying God.

A look at this analysis of the *sūrah* will show the readers how it stands out as a whole under a single theme.

We now begin with the explanation of the *sūrah*.

اَللّٰھُمَّ اَرِنَا الْحَقَّ حَقًّا وَارْزُقْنَا اتِّبَاعَہُ، وَاَرِنَا الْبَاطِلَ بَاطِلًا وَارْزُقْنَا اجْتِنَابَہُ

(God! show us the truth the way it is and make us follow it and show us evil the way it is and make us abstain from it).

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Section 1 (Verse 1)

Text and Translation

بِسۡمِ اللّٰہِ الرَّحۡمٰنِ الرَّحِیۡمِ

سُبۡحٰنَ الَّذِیۡۤ اَسۡرٰی بِعَبۡدِہٖ لَیۡلًا مِّنَ الۡمَسۡجِدِ الۡحَرَامِ اِلَی الۡمَسۡجِدِ الۡاَقۡصَا الَّذِیۡ بٰرَکۡنَا حَوۡلَہٗ لِنُرِیَہٗ مِنۡ اٰیٰتِنَا ؕ اِنَّہٗ ہُوَ السَّمِیۡعُ الۡبَصِیۡرُ ﴿۱﴾

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Ever-Merciful.

Exalted is the Being who one night took His servant from the Sacred Mosque to that Distant Mosque whose surroundings We have blessed so that We can make him observe some of Our signs. Indeed, only He hears and knows all. (1)

Explanation

سُبۡحٰنَ الَّذِیۡۤ اَسۡرٰی بِعَبۡدِہٖ لَیۡلًا مِّنَ الۡمَسۡجِدِ الۡحَرَامِ اِلَی الۡمَسۡجِدِ الۡاَقۡصَا الَّذِیۡ بٰرَکۡنَا حَوۡلَہٗ لِنُرِیَہٗ مِنۡ اٰیٰتِنَا ؕ اِنَّہٗ ہُوَ السَّمِیۡعُ الۡبَصِیۡرُ ﴿۱﴾[1]

The word سُبۡحٰنَ is meant to absolve God from every blemish and shortcoming. When a discourse begins with this word, the purpose is to remove any wrong estimation or misconception about God. Here the Prophet's ascension (*mi'rāj*) begins with its mention because this incident was meant to dispel a grossly incorrect estimation of God in the mind of he Jews and the Idolaters. Both these groups were the sole occupants each of two great centres of religion. Contrary to the basic objective of these centres, they had made them a den for polytheism and idolatry. In fact, they had done what precisely Jesus (sws) is reported to have said: you have made it a den of robbers (Luke, 19:46). Both these sacred places were under the control of these dishonest and corrupt factions.[2] They were doing whatever they wanted in these

1. Exalted is the Being who one night took His servant from the Sacred Mosque to that Distant Mosque whose surroundings We have blessed so that We can make him observe some of Our signs. Indeed, only He hears and knows all.

2. The above cited words of Jesus (sws) are sufficient to give an idea of the situation of the Distant Mosque at that time. If readers need to understand the situation of the Ka'bah at that time, they may look up my exegesis of Sūrah al-Lahab. It will become evident from it how

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houses as if its real owner was unaware of their doings and would never hold them accountable for them. As referred to earlier, the incident of the Prophet's ascension was a prelude to the fact that the custodianship of these houses of God will now be entrusted to those who will fulfil their real objective. For this reason, the verse began with the word سُبْحٰنَ. The attributes of God mentioned at the end clarify that the naïve who think that God is blind and deaf should open their eyes and ears. Time is now near for their accountability. It is God Who actually sees and hears and now He will administer justice among people on the basis of His perfect knowledge.

The word اَسْرٰی means to journey at night. When it is converted to a transitive verb through the preposition ب, it means to take someone to some place at night. Although "night" is an inherent part of this word, yet at times this word occurs without this qualification to merely connote a journey. It is precisely for this reason that the word لَيْلًا (night) is mentioned separately to emphasize that this incident took place at night.

The use of this word for the Prophet (sws) on this occasion evidences explicitness for him, God's extreme love and affection for him and his perfection in being God's servant. It is as if no other introduction and description of the Prophet's personality is needed. The word عَبْد (servant) pinpoints in a very specific manner the person who bests represents it. "Sacred Mosque" obviously refers to the Ka'bah. As for the other mosque, it has been introduced by two attributes: "distant" and one "whose surroundings We have blessed." This distant mosque was situated in Jerusalem at a distance of about 40 days from the inhabitants of Makkah, the foremost addressees of this *sūrah*. Its introduction by this name easily transferred their mind to it. The second attribute refers to the nature of the land it is situated in. It refers to both its material and spiritual benefits. In ancient scriptures, it is called the land of milk and honey. This alludes to its extreme fertility and luxuriance. As for gauging its spiritual blessings is concerned, no other land has the status of being the birth and death place of so many prophets of God.

The words "so that We can make him observe some of Our signs" express the objective of this journey. Readers may note an aspect of eloquence in the style of this verse. The earlier part of the verse did not reveal the speaker which signifies the majesty of an event. This part expresses the speaker which signifies affection and attention. No details are provided of the signs referred to. However, it is evident from concomitant indications that they refer to grand manifestations and divine disclosures with which these two houses of God were replete with. The purpose of showing them to the Prophet (sws) obviously was that God's intention becomes evident to him that all these glorious entities entrusted to these dishonest people will be confiscated from them and handed over to him. In other words, in this very difficult period of his preaching, the glad tidings of help and support that were being given to the Prophet

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Abū Lahab had ravaged its sanctity.

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(sws) were further strengthened by this journey of his ascension and he was also shown what was to transpire.

As for the question that what he was shown was in a dream or while he was awake is concerned, its answer has been given by the Qur'ān in this very *sūrah* ahead. It is stated:

وَاِذْ قُلْنَا لَكَ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ اَحَاطَ بِالنَّاسِ ؕ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّءْيَا الَّتِيْٓ اَرَيْنٰكَ اِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُوْنَةَ فِى الْقُرْاٰنِ ؕ وَنُخَوِّفُهُمْ ۙ فَمَا يَزِيْدُهُمْ اِلَّا طُغْيَانًا كَبِيْرًا (١٧: ٦٠)

And remember when We said to you: Your Lord has surrounded the people. And that dream We showed you, We only made it a trial for the people and that tree as well which has been cursed in the Qur'ān. And We frighten them, but this thing is merely increasing them in their extreme rebelliousness. (17:60)

It is obvious that the dream alluded to in the above cited verse can only be applied to what is referred to in the verse under discussion by the words لِنُرِيَهٗ مِنْ اٰيٰتِنَا (so that We can make him observe some of Our signs). The word إراءت is used in the Qur'ān at numerous instances to connote something shown in a dream. Our exegetes also say that it refers to this. Hence its meaning is very clear. However, it should be kept in mind that the dreams of God's prophets are not mere dreams – for many dreams are wayward – they are true dreams which have a number of distinctive features that must be kept in mind.

Firstly, such true dreams are a means of God's revelations. Just as God speaks to his prophets and messengers through his angels, he also at times guides them through dreams.

Secondly, such dreams absolutely clear and unambiguous – like the whiteness of dawn. A prophet receives full assurance about them. If there is anything in them which is in symbolic form, its implication is also conveyed to him by God.

Thirdly, this is the most effective way when the purpose is to make a prophet observe certain facts and incidents. This is because through this means he is able to see them with all details and at the same time things which cannot be expressed in words easily are shown to him in symbolic form.

Fourthly, what is observed through a dream is a great deal more certain, all-embracing, deep and invasive than what is observed through the eyes. Eyes can be deceived but true dreams carry no deception. Eyes can only see in a limited scope but dreams are all-encompassing. Eyes are unable to understand meanings and have their own constraints. On the other hand, dreams are able to grasp meanings and interpretations. Moses (sws) wanted to see God's manifestation with his eyes but he did not have the capacity to do so. On the other hand, Muḥammad (sws) had the capacity to observe what he was shown during this journey and his eyes were not

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dazed.

The context and occasion of the words "indeed, only He hears and knows all" has been explained earlier. These words carry a great amount of emphasis in them. In other words, only God actually hears and sees. Nothing is beyond his hearing and sight. If others are able to see and hear, it is because He has granted them a very limited part of these faculties. As indicated earlier, the purpose of alluding to these attributes of God is to warn the Idolaters of the Quraysh and the Israelites that they should not think that God is unaware of their doings. He is seeing and hearing everything.

Section II (Verses 2-8)

In the succeeding verses, the arrogant notion of the Jews that they are the progeny of Jacob (sws) and the favoured ones of God and hence religious leadership is their sole prerogative is criticized. Because of this notion, these Jews, in the first instance were not even prepared to accept a prophet or a messenger outside their race and for this reason opposed the Prophet (sws) right from the beginning. Then when he narrated to them his observations of this journey and they became aware of them, their anger further increased. At no cost, could they accept the claim that Muḥammd (sws) had become the heir to their prophets and was now also their religious leader. In order to dispel this haughtiness from them, the Qur'ān has explained that no nation is entitled to His favours and blessings because of their lineage. It is faith and righteous deeds which earn them. Evidence from their own history is cited to them: it is evident from their own scriptures that they would twice rebel against God on a huge scale and spread anarchy in the land and on both occasions, they would be utterly routed by God's fierce servants. Thus these predictions materialized word for word. When they reformed their state of affairs, God was merciful to them and when they spread disorder, God severely punished them. At this time too, they are facing the same situation. God's messenger has opened the way to success and salvation for them. If they accept his call, they will have an equal share in his blessings and if they reject it, then they should remember that God has not left them to themselves. He will once again punish them the way He did so before.

Readers may now proceed to study these verses.

Text and Translation

وَاٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ وَجَعَلْنٰهُ هُدًى لِّبَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ اَلَّا تَتَّخِذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِيْ وَكِيْلًا ۝٢ ذُرِّيَّةَ مَنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ
نُوْحٍ ۭ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ عَبْدًا شَكُوْرًا ۝٣ وَقَضَيْنَآ اِلٰى بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ فِي الْكِتٰبِ لَتُفْسِدُنَّ فِي الْاَرْضِ مَرَّتَيْنِ وَلَتَعْلُنَّ
عُلُوًّا كَبِيْرًا ۝٤ فَاِذَا جَاۗءَ وَعْدُ اُوْلٰىهُمَا بَعَثْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ عِبَادًا لَّنَآ اُولِيْ بَاْسٍ شَدِيْدٍ فَجَاسُوْا خِلٰلَ الدِّيَارِ ۭ وَ

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كَانَ وَعْدًا مَّفْعُوْلًا ۝٥ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَا لَكُمُ الْكَرَّةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَاَمْدَدْنٰكُمْ بِاَمْوَالٍ وَّبَنِيْنَ وَجَعَلْنٰكُمْ اَكْثَرَ نَفِيْرًا ۝٦ اِنْ اَحْسَنْتُمْ اَحْسَنْتُمْ لِاَنْفُسِكُمْ ۫ وَاِنْ اَسَاْتُمْ فَلَهَا ؕ فَاِذَا جَآءَ وَعْدُ الْاٰخِرَةِ لِيَسُوْٓءٗا وُجُوْهَكُمْ وَلِيَدْخُلُوا الْمَسْجِدَ كَمَا دَخَلُوْهُ اَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَّلِيُتَبِّرُوْا مَا عَلَوْا تَتْبِيْرًا ۝٧ عَسٰى رَبُّكُمْ اَنْ يَّرْحَمَكُمْ ۚ وَاِنْ عُدْتُّمْ عُدْنَا ۘ وَجَعَلْنَا جَهَنَّمَ لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ حَصِيْرًا ۝٨

And We had given Moses the Book and had made it a memorandum of guidance: "Do not make anyone your guardian except Myself, O progeny of those whom We had boarded with Noah!" Undoubtedly, he was a grateful servant. (2-3)

And We had informed the Israelites about this decision of Ours in the Book: "Twice shall you surely create disorder in the land and show great rebelliousness." Thus when the time for that first promise arrives, We let loose on you extremely powerful people of Ours. So, they barged into the houses and that certain promise was fulfilled. Then We rotated your turn to them and helped you with wealth and children and made you a large group. If you do good deeds, it will be for yourself and if you do bad deeds, they too will be for yourself. After that, when the time of the second promise arrives, We let loose on you Our mighty people so that they may ruin your faces and barge into the mosque the way they had done the first time and ravage whatever they can lay hands on. It may well be that your Lord shows mercy to you and if you do the same, We too shall do the same and We have made Hell a shed for the disbelievers. (4-8)

Explanation

وَاٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ وَجَعَلْنٰهُ هُدًى لِّبَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ اَلَّا تَتَّخِذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِيْ وَكِيْلًا ۝٢[3]

The word الْكِتٰبَ refers to the Torah and وَكِيْل refers to a guardian and helper and someone who can be consigned all of one's affairs by completely trusting him.

This verse is a prelude to a mention of the wrong beliefs that had crept up in the Jews. The purpose is to refer to the fact that they did not duly value this elaborate arrangement of guidance made by God. They completely ignored His scripture of guidance and in spite of the explicit directive of abstaining from polytheism ended up in incriminating themselves with this filth.

The allusion to monotheism after a mention of the Book refers to its foundational status in all the teachings of religion. The entire *sharī'ah* is based on it. A group which adheres to monotheism adheres to religion. As soon as this attachment slackens, the whole religion is lost.

It is not even needed to state that the whole Torah is replete with the teaching of

3. And We had given Moses the Book and had made it a memorandum of guidance: "Do not make anyone your guardian except Myself."

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monotheism. Citing references may prolong the discussion. For this reason, I will confine myself to just one quote:

> I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God. (Exodus, 20:2-5)

How similar are the Qur'ānic words "Do not make anyone your guardian except Myself" with the Biblical ones "You shall not bow down to them or worship them." Yet in spite of this explicit directive, the Jews were incriminated with polytheism on numerous occasions. Their prophets expressed great sorrow in this attitude of theirs and even rebuked them. Jesus (sws) went as far as to say: "O Israelites! You have omitted adultery the first night."[4]

ذُرِّيَّةَ مَنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ ۚ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ عَبْدًا شَكُوْرًا ﴿۳﴾[5]

The particle of invocation (O!) is suppressed here. In other words, together with the teaching of monotheism they were reminded to keep in mind that they were the noble remnants of Noah's progeny that was saved in the Ark by God. Since Noah (sws) was a grateful person, they too should show gratitude and adhere to monotheism. They must remember that the people of Noah (sws) were exterminated by God from the face of this earth because of polytheism. They too will be exterminated by Him if they follow their ways.

وَقَضَيْنَآ اِلٰى بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ فِى الْكِتٰبِ لَتُفْسِدُنَّ فِى الْاَرْضِ مَرَّتَيْنِ وَلَتَعْلُنَّ عُلُوًّا كَبِيْرًا ﴿۴﴾[6]

The preposition اِلٰى after قَضَيْنَآ (We decided) shows that a verb which collocates with this preposition be understood to exist. The verb should be اَبْلَغْنَا (We informed) or some other to its affect. The translation would thus be: We informed the Israelites after taking this decision.

The word الْكِتٰبِ (The Book) here encompasses all the scriptures of the Jews. In the Qur'ān, this word has been used for the Torah as well as for the scriptures of other prophets of the Israelites. The prophets David (sws), Isaiah (sws), Jeremiah (sws) and Ezkiel (sws) warned the Jews of the first of their two disorders and its fate referred to

4. I am unable to find a reference to this quote. (*Translator*)

5. "O progeny of those whom We had boarded with Noah!" Undoubtedly, he was a grateful servant.

6. And We had informed the Israelites about this decision of Ours in the Book: "Twice shall you surely create disorder in the land and show great rebelliousness."

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in the verse, while Jesus (sws) warned them of the second of these disorders and its fate. Disorder means rebellion against monotheism and the *sharī'ah* of God. The history of the Jews is replete with such disorders. Thus one of them is mentioned in Sūrah al-Baqarah when the ark of the covenant was snatched from them. However, the disorders referred in this verse were such that the whole nation of the Jews was humiliated and routed. This is how David (sws) had predicted the first disorder and its fate in Psalm 106:

34 They did not destroy the peoples
as the LORD had commanded them,
35 but they mingled with the nations
and adopted their customs.
36 They worshiped their idols,
which became a snare to them.
37 They sacrificed their sons
and their daughters to false gods.
38 They shed innocent blood,
the blood of their sons and daughters,
whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan,
and the land was desecrated by their blood.
39 They defiled themselves by what they did;
by their deeds they prostituted themselves.
40 Therefore the LORD was angry with his people
and abhorred his inheritance.
41 He gave them into the hands of the nations,
and their foes ruled over them.

Following are the words of Jesus (sws) regarding the prophecy of the second disorder:

Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down. (Matthew, 24:2)

In Luke, he says:

Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. For the time will come when you will say, 'Blessed are the childless women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' Then "'they will say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!" (23:28-30)

At the end of the verse, words to the affect فنعذبكم مرتين (thus We shall twice punish

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you) are suppressed. In other words, the complete sense would be: We had informed the Israelites in the Book about this decision of Ours that twice you shall create disorder in the land and be very rebellious and on both occasions We will severely punish you." Since these implications were evident and since all its details are coming up in the succeeding verses, it was suppressed here by the Qur'ān.

فَاِذَا جَآءَ وَعۡدُ اُوۡلٰىهُمَا بَعَثۡنَا عَلَيۡكُمۡ عِبَادًا لَّنَاۤ اُولِىۡ بَاۡسٍ شَدِيۡدٍ فَجَاسُوۡا خِلٰلَ الدِّيَارِ ؕ وَكَانَ وَعۡدًا مَّفۡعُوۡلًا ۝7

The particle اِذَا is not merely used for the future; it is also used to express an established practice and convention, and at times to portray a situation. Here it is used for the latter and the translation keeps this into account.

The prepostion عَلٰى after بَعَثَ evidences that besides "stirring up" this verb encompasses the meaning of "letting loose someone on someone."

The words فَجَاسُوْا خِلٰلَ الدِّيَارِ are a depiction of extreme humiliation and disgrace of the Jews because if the enemy is so powerful that it barges into houses, this means that it has totally violated all respect and honour. Here this much is mentioned since this this was sufficient to portray their humiliation. However, later it will be mentioned that the enemy did not stop at barging into their houses; it totally violated the sanctity of the Aqṣā Mosque.

This is a reference to the attack of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon and Ninveh who in 586 BC had decimated Jerusalem.

Jeremiah (sws) prophecied this event in these words:

> Therefore the LORD Almighty says this: "Because you have not listened to my words, I will summon all the peoples of the north and my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon," declares the LORD. (Jeremiah, 25:8-9)

Here are his further words of warning:

> I will banish from them the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, the sound of millstones and the light of the lamp. This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. (Jeremiah, 25:10-11)

This is how Jeremiah (sws) lamented:

> How the Lord has covered Daughter Zion with the cloud of his anger! He has hurled down the splendour of Israel from heaven to earth; he has not remembered his footstool in the day of his anger. Without pity the Lord has swallowed up all

7. Thus when the time for that first promise arrives, We let loose on you extremely powerful people of Ours. So, they barged into the houses and that certain promise was fulfilled.

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the dwellings of Jacob; in his wrath he has torn down the strongholds of Daughter Judah. He has brought her kingdom and its princes down to the ground in dishonour. In fierce anger he has cut off every horn of Israel. (Lamentations, 2:1-3)

The words عِبَادًا لَّنَآ اُولِيْ بَاْسٍ شَدِيْدٍ (extremely powerful people of Ours) are used for the army of Nebuchadnezzar. These words are not used because of their piety and religiosity but because they served as tools and weapons to implement the will of God. Though they were filthy people yet they were instrumental in implementing God's will by cleaning a huge pile of filth. For this reason, they were actually ascribed to God. The Israelites arrogantly claimed نَحْنُ اَبْنٰٓؤُا اللّٰهِ وَ اَحِبَّآؤُهٗ (We are God's near and favoured ones). God made it clear to them that the shoes by which they have been beaten have some weight with God but they have none whatsoever.

ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَا لَكُمُ الْكَرَّةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَاَمْدَدْنٰكُمْ بِاَمْوَالٍ وَّبَنِيْنَ وَجَعَلْنٰكُمْ اَكْثَرَ نَفِيْرًا ۝[8]

After years of slavery and utter helplessness, when the Israelites turned back to reform themselves, they were once again helped by Him. They were blessed with wealth and riches. His help manifested for them in the form of Cyrus the king of Persia defeating the Chaldeans and occupying their country in 539 BC. After that, they were allowed by him to go back and inhabit their country. As a result, they received great impetus.

اِنْ اَحْسَنْتُمْ اَحْسَنْتُمْ لِاَنْفُسِكُمْ ۖ وَاِنْ اَسَاْتُمْ فَلَهَا ۭ فَاِذَا جَاۗءَ وَعْدُ الْاٰخِرَةِ لِيَسُوْۗءٗا وُجُوْهَكُمْ وَلِيَدْخُلُوا الْمَسْجِدَ كَمَا دَخَلُوْهُ اَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَّلِيُتَبِّرُوْا مَا عَلَوْا تَتْبِيْرًا ۝[9]

In other words, when the Israelites were emancipated after a long period of slavery, it carried the lesson alluded to by the verse. Even their prophets fully informed them of this. However, what transpired was exactly in accordance with what was prophesied.

The words بَعَثْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ عِبَادًا لَّنَآ اُولِيْ بَاْسٍ (We let loose on them extremely powerful people of Ours) are suppressed before because of concomitant indications. The ل in لِيَسُوْۗءٗا distinctly points to them.

It is evident from Biblical history that this is a mention of the destruction of the Jews at the hands of the Roman Emperor Titus in 70 AD as alluded to by Jesus (sws).

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8. Then We rotated your turn to them and helped you with wealth and children and made you a large group.

9. If you do good deeds, it will be for yourself and if you do bad deeds, they too will be for yourself. After that, when the time of the second promise arrives, We let loose on you Our mighty people so that they may ruin your faces and barge into the mosque the way they had done the first time and ravage whatever they can lay hands on.

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عَسٰى رَبُّكُمْ اَنْ يَّرْحَمَكُمْ ۚ وَاِنْ عُدْتُّمْ عُدْنَا ۘ وَجَعَلْنَا جَهَنَّمَ لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ حَصِيْرًا ﴿۸﴾[10]

The word حَصِيْر refers to a shed in which animals are kept.

This verse addresses the Jews who were present when this verse was revealed and were fully backing the disbelievers of the Quraysh in opposing the Qur'ān. They are being told that whatever has happened belongs to the past and has been narrated to them. Now if they want to be secure from God's wrath, they should adhere to the message of this unlettered prophet that has been sent to them. If they reform themselves, God too will show His mercy to them and if they revert to their evil ways of the past, God will take them to task they way He did earlier. They must also remember that besides the humiliation they will suffer in this world, they will be consigned to the shed of Hell in the hereafter.

The tone of this verse is noteworthy. Initially, the style was indirect (عَسٰى رَبُّكُمْ اَنْ يَّرْحَمَكُمْ). Then it became direct by the words اِنْ عُدْتُّمْ عُدْنَا. The first part has a ring of disregard. In other words, if they adopt the right attitude, it will benefit only themselves and if not they will invite their own doom and not harm God in any way. The second part carries a very stern warning. For this reason, first, the address has become direct which is more appropriate for warning and then it also has vagueness and conciseness in it. It is said "We will do the same." However, it is not described how this would be done. It is left to the understanding of those who can understand. The great severity found in this sentence is concealed in this vagueness.

Section III (Verses 9-21)

In this section of verses, both the Jews and the Idolaters of the Quraysh are invited to profess faith in the Qur'ān. It is calling them to the same straight path of human nature other prophets called. The fates of those who accept this call and those who reject it are depicted and those who have shut their eyes to the signs spread all around them and to the clear revelations of the Qur'ān are rebuked. They instead are demanding the signs of punishment. In this regard, the established practice of God regarding punishing nations is rather concisely alluded to.

Readers may now proceed to study these verses.

Text and Translation

اِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَهْدِيْ لِلَّتِيْ هِيَ اَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا كَبِيْرًا ﴿۹﴾ وَّاَنَّ

10. It may well be that your Lord shows mercy to you and if you do the same, We too shall do the same and We have made Hell a shed for the disbelievers.

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الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ اَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ﴿١٠﴾ وَيَدْعُ الْاِنْسَانُ بِالشَّرِّ دُعَآءَهٗ بِالْخَيْرِ ؕ وَكَانَ الْاِنْسَانُ
عَجُوْلًا ﴿١١﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ اٰيَتَيْنِ فَمَحَوْنَآ اٰيَةَ الَّيْلِ وَجَعَلْنَآ اٰيَةَ النَّهَارِ مُبْصِرَةً لِّتَبْتَغُوْا فَضْلًا مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ
وَلِتَعْلَمُوْا عَدَدَ السِّنِيْنَ وَالْحِسَابَ ؕ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَصَّلْنٰهُ تَفْصِيْلًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَكُلَّ اِنْسَانٍ اَلْزَمْنٰهُ طٰٓئِرَهٗ فِيْ عُنُقِهٖ ؕ وَنُخْرِجُ
لَهٗ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ كِتٰبًا يَّلْقٰىهُ مَنْشُوْرًا ﴿١٣﴾ اِقْرَاْ كِتٰبَكَ ؕ كَفٰى بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيْبًا ﴿١٤﴾ مَنِ اهْتَدٰى فَاِنَّمَا
يَهْتَدِيْ لِنَفْسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَاِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا ؕ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِّزْرَ اُخْرٰى ؕ وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِيْنَ حَتّٰى نَبْعَثَ رَسُوْلًا ﴿١٥﴾ وَ
اِذَآ اَرَدْنَآ اَنْ نُّهْلِكَ قَرْيَةً اَمَرْنَا مُتْرَفِيْهَا فَفَسَقُوْا فِيْهَا فَحَقَّ عَلَيْهَا الْقَوْلُ فَدَمَّرْنٰهَا تَدْمِيْرًا ﴿١٦﴾ وَكَمْ اَهْلَكْنَا
مِنَ الْقُرُوْنِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ نُوْحٍ ؕ وَكَفٰى بِرَبِّكَ بِذُنُوْبِ عِبَادِهٖ خَبِيْرًا ۢ بَصِيْرًا ﴿١٧﴾ مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيْدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ عَجَّلْنَا لَهٗ فِيْهَا
مَا نَشَآءُ لِمَنْ نُّرِيْدُ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا لَهٗ جَهَنَّمَ ۚ يَصْلٰىهَا مَذْمُوْمًا مَّدْحُوْرًا ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَنْ اَرَادَ الْاٰخِرَةَ وَسَعٰى لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ
مُؤْمِنٌ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَّشْكُوْرًا ﴿١٩﴾ كُلًّا نُّمِدُّ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ وَهٰٓؤُلَآءِ مِنْ عَطَآءِ رَبِّكَ ؕ وَمَا كَانَ عَطَآءُ رَبِّكَ مَحْظُوْرًا ﴿٢٠﴾
اُنْظُرْ كَيْفَ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ ؕ وَلَلْاٰخِرَةُ اَكْبَرُ دَرَجٰتٍ وَّاَكْبَرُ تَفْضِيْلًا ﴿٢١﴾

Indeed, this Qur'ān shows the way which is absolutely straight and gives glad tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that for them is a great reward and those who do not believe in the Hereafter, for them We have prepared a painful torment. (9-10)

And a human being desires vice in the same way as he should desire virtue and a human being is very impatient. And We made the night and the day as two signs. So, We faded the sign of the night and made the sign of the day radiant so that you may seek the bounty of your Lord and so that you can calculate the years and know their count. And We have detailed out everything completely. (11-12)

And We have tied the fate of each person with his neck, and on the Day of Judgement We shall bring forth a register for him which he will find totally open. Here, read your account of deeds. Today you yourself are sufficient to take your own account. He who treads the path of guidance, he treads it for himself and he who goes astray, he alone bears its evil consequence. And no bearer of burden shall bear someone else's burden. And We were never to punish unless We send a messenger. (13-15)

And when We intend to destroy a settlement, We direct its affluent. So, they create great disorder in it. Thus, the word is fulfilled for them. Then at once We totally wipe it out. And how many a nation after Noah We destroyed and sufficient is your Lord to be aware of and see the sins of His people. (16-17)

He who wants the world, We give it for whomsoever We want and in whatever quantity We want. After that, We have Hell for him which he shall enter humiliated and accursed. And he who seeks the Hereafter, and also strives for it the way it is

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befitting and is also a believer, then it is such people whose effort will be accepted. We help everyone with the bounty of your Lord; to these also and to those as well. And the bounty of your Lord is not withheld from anyone. Observe, how We have granted one superiority over the other, and the ranks and blessings of the Hereafter, however, are much more. (18-21)

Text and Translation

اِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَهْدِيْ لِلَّتِيْ هِيَ اَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا كَبِيْرًا ۝٩ وَّاَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ اَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ۝١٠[11]

The word اَقْوَم means "straight." It refers to the path which is in exact harmony with human nature and intellect, and leads a person to God.

This is an invitation to the Israelites and the Idolaters of the Quraysh to profess faith in the Qur'ān. If they want to reach God, they should leave aside wandering here and there and adhere to the path the Qur'ān is calling them to. The verse gives glad tidings to those who after professing faith in the Qur'ān adopt a life of righteousness. As for those who do not believe in the hereafter and are denying the Qur'ān as a result, they will face a painful torment in the hereafter.

وَيَدْعُ الْاِنْسَانُ بِالشَّرِّ دُعَآءَهٗ بِالْخَيْرِ ۭ وَكَانَ الْاِنْسَانُ عَجُوْلًا ۝١١[12]

This is a depiction of the rivals of the Qur'ān who instead of professing faith in it were demanding a sign of punishment. Since this demand was an absolutely foolish one and was devastating for them, what is stated here is said while turning away from them in general words to express sorrow.

In other words, instead of benefitting from the respite and reforming themselves, they are making this demand this naïve demand.

وَجَعَلْنَا الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ اٰيَتَيْنِ فَمَحَوْنَآ اٰيَةَ الَّيْلِ وَجَعَلْنَآ اٰيَةَ النَّهَارِ مُبْصِرَةً لِّتَبْتَغُوْا فَضْلًا مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَلِتَعْلَمُوْا عَدَدَ السِّنِيْنَ وَالْحِسَابَ ۭ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَصَّلْنٰهُ تَفْصِيْلًا ۝١٢[13]

In the first part of this verse, after فَمَحَوْنَآ اٰيَةَ الَّيْلِ words to the effect مُظْلِمَةً لِتَسْتَرِيْحُوا are

11. Indeed, this Qur'ān shows the way which is absolutely straight and gives glad tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that for them is a great reward and those who do not believe in the Hereafter, for them We have prepared a painful torment.

12. And a human being desires vice in the same way as he should desire virtue and a human being is very impatient.

13. And We made the night and the day as two signs. So, We faded the sign of the night and made the sign of the day radiant so that you may seek the bounty of your Lord and so that you can calculate the years and know their count. And We have detailed out everything completely.

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suppressed as evidenced by the later words: مُبْصِرَةً لِّتَبْتَغُوْا فَضْلًا مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ. The meaning would be: We made the night dark so that you receive comfort from it and made the day radiant so that you obtain the bounty of God.

The verse directs the attention of those who were demanding the sign of punishment to the signs found around them.

It is stated that from the succession of the night and day with such precision people are able to find the count of years and calculate other things as well. If there was no such difference between the night and day how would they have distinguished things from one another? Besides these signs of the vast world, a further favour done to them by God is that every necessary detail has been provided to them in this Book of theirs so that even the Book is sufficient for those who deliberate.

Just as attention has been directed here through the succession of day and night to what is mentioned earlier, at other instances, the Qur'ān has adduced some other facts from this phenomenon. Thus for example, it has adduced monotheism from the harmony between day and night in spite of their contradictory natures. Similarly, the hereafter too has been adduced from their succession. These details are presented earlier in this exegesis and they are coming up ahead as well.

وَكُلَّ اِنْسَانٍ اَلْزَمْنٰهُ طٰٓئِرَهٗ فِيْ عُنُقِهٖ ؕ وَنُخْرِجُ لَهٗ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ كِتٰبًا يَّلْقٰىهُ مَنْشُوْرًا ﴿١٣﴾ اِقْرَاْ كِتٰبَكَ ؕ كَفٰى بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيْبًا ﴿١٤﴾[14]

The real meaning of the word طٰٓئِر is "a bird." However, since the Arabs used it as an omen and portent and would try to find the future from birds, this word began to be used in the meaning of "fate" and "future."

The implication of these verses is that on the Day of Judgement no one soul will bear the burden of another. Every person will observe his deeds and carry their burden alone.

مَنِ اهْتَدٰى فَاِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِيْ لِنَفْسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَاِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا ؕ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِّزْرَ اُخْرٰى ؕ وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِيْنَ حَتّٰى نَبْعَثَ رَسُوْلًا ﴿١٥﴾[15]

This verse is a further explanation of the previous one.

The last part explains the established practice of God regarding punishing nations. Before they are punished, He sends them a messenger to conclusively deliver the truth

14. And We have tied the fate of each person with his neck, and on the Day of Judgement We shall bring forth a register for him which he will find totally open. Here, read your account of deeds. Today you yourself are sufficient to take your own account.

15. He who treads the path of guidance, he treads it for himself and he who goes astray, he alone bears its evil consequence. And no bearer of burden shall bear someone else's burden. And We were never to punish unless We send a messenger.

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to them. In other words, they are being reprimanded of their haste in demanding the punishment and told that its first step has been fulfilled. A messenger has come to them to conclusively deliver the truth. The only time that remains is when the truth is actually delivered to them in this manner. If they do not benefit from this respite, they will be doomed.

وَاِذَآ اَرَدْنَآ اَنْ نُّهْلِكَ قَرْيَةً اَمَرْنَا مُتْرَفِيْهَا فَفَسَقُوْا فِيْهَا فَحَقَّ عَلَيْهَا الْقَوْلُ فَدَمَّرْنٰهَا تَدْمِيْرًا ﴿١٦﴾[16]

The word اَمَرْ does not merely mean "to give a command," it also at times means "to give respite." When a person gets tired and frustrated in trying to reconcile or resolve a matter with another person or a group, he says: إفعلوا ما بدا لكم (do whatever you want to). An imperative style is apparently adopted here, but it actually implies giving respite. In a similar way, the Almighty gives respite to people once the truth is conclusively communicated to them so that no excuse remains for them.

The word مُتْرَفِيْنْ refers to the elite and affluent class of a society. This respite is given to the affluent because they have the reins of the society. Thus messengers of God address them the foremost. Then it is their attitude of stubbornness which creates hoplessness in their messenger and their going after killing their respective messenger that the latter migrates from them and the nation is punished.

The verse is a further explanation of the established practice of God regarding punushing nations to whom messengers are sent.

وَكَمْ اَهْلَكْنَا مِنَ الْقُرُوْنِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ نُوْحٍ ۭ وَكَفٰى بِرَبِّكَ بِذُنُوْبِ عِبَادِهٖ خَبِيْرًۢا بَصِيْرًا ﴿١٧﴾[17]

This is a further corroboration to the just referred to the established practice of God through historical evidence. The Prophet (sws) is sounded assurance in the last part of the verse: when God is aware of the crimes of the rebellious people of his nation, He will not given them any respite when the time comes to punish them.

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيْدُ الْعَاجِلَةَ عَجَّلْنَا لَهٗ فِيْهَا مَا نَشَاۗءُ لِمَنْ نُّرِيْدُ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا لَهٗ جَهَنَّمَ ۚ يَصْلٰىهَا مَذْمُوْمًا مَّدْحُوْرًا ﴿١٨﴾[18]

The word عَاجِلَة is used in contrast to the hereafter and hence refers to this world and to is immediate gains.

This verse states the established practice of God regarding giving respite to a nation. The words مَا نَشَاۗءُ لِمَنْ نُّرِيْدُ need to be specially kept in mind. The implication is that

16. And when We intend to destroy a settlement, We direct its affluent. So, they create great disorder in it. Thus, the word is fulfilled for them. Then at once We totally wipe it out.

17. And how many a nation after Noah We destroyed and sufficient is your Lord to be aware of and see the sins of His people.

18. He who wants the world, We give it for whomsoever We want and in whatever quantity We want. After that, We have Hell for him which he shall enter humiliated and accursed.

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those who have worldly desires do not even have the authority to earn whatever they want to. This matter, in fact, rests with God. It is He Who gives to whomsoever He wants in which quantity He desires.

وَمَنْ اَرَادَ الْاٰخِرَةَ وَسَعٰى لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَّشْكُوْرًا ﴿١٩﴾[19]

This is a mention of those who seek the hereafter and will be successful. The implication is that it is these people who earn in this world whatever is ordained for them and the hereafter is already an abode of success for them.

Here too the words وَسَعٰى لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ must be kept in consideration. The implication is that the pleasures of the hereafter will not merely be obtained by desiring them; they also require a befitting effort and a faith too that is devoid of any stain of polytheism. Unless both these pre-requisites are present with this desire, it will not be fulfilled.

كُلًّا نُّمِدُّ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ وَهٰٓؤُلَآءِ مِنْ عَطَآءِ رَبِّكَ ؕ وَمَا كَانَ عَطَآءُ رَبِّكَ مَحْظُوْرًا ﴿٢٠﴾[20]

When the word كُلّ is mentioned after various groups the way it is here, then on such occasions it becomes a defined noun. In other words, it refers to the groups that have just been mentioned. The implication is that the Almighty's bounties are available to everyone. Those who are all the time engrossed in acquiring the pleasures of this world while completely disregarding the next world are given whatever bounties God has odained for them. They are not deprived by God because of forgetting Him and the hereafter. Similarly, those swho strive for the life of the next world, they are given the share God has ordained for them in this world and in the next too they will fully earn the reward of their deeds. The implication is that when this is the actual reality, then why should a person deprive himself of the abiding blessings of the hereafter while becoming a slave to the pleasures of this trivial and temporary world. Why should he not tread the path which makes him worthy of the eternal favours of the hereafter and also receives whatever is ordained for him in this world.

اُنْظُرْ كَيْفَ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ ؕ وَلَلْاٰخِرَةُ اَكْبَرُ دَرَجٰتٍ وَّاَكْبَرُ تَفْضِيْلًا ﴿٢١﴾[21]

People should observe that God has given abundantly to whomsoever He wanted and sparingly to whomsoever He wanted. A person does not have the authority to acquire blessings to whatever extent he wants. Similarly, in the hereafter too, all

19. And he who seeks the Hereafter, and also strives for it the way it is befitting and is also a believer, then it is such people whose effort will be accepted.

20. We help everyone with the bounty of your Lord; to these also and to those as well. And the bounty of your Lord is not withheld from anyone.

21. Observe, how We have granted one superiority over the other, and the ranks and blessings of the Hereafter, however, are much more.

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authority will rest in the hands of God. He will grant respect to whomsoever He wants and humiliate whomsoever He intends. None will have the power to influence God's decisions there. Since the ranks of the hereafter are much higher than those of this world, so those who have to strive should strive for the ranks of the hereafter. Why should he destroy the gains of the next world by becoming a slave to the desires of this world.

Section IV (Verses 22-39)

Earlier in verse 9, it was stated اِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَهْدِيْ لِلَّتِيْ هِيَ اَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا كَبِيْرًا.[22] After that, the discourse shifted to some other related issues. Now it is once again connecting to the original and the path which the Qur'ān outlines in leading people to God is explained. This is the straight path followed by human nature and intellect and it is this path which brings into existence the life of justice and goodness which God likes and on which is based the foundations of a righteous society. Readers may revise in their minds verse 90 of Sūrah al-Naḥl in which bases of the do's and don'ts of the Qur'ān are delineated:

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَاْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَ الْاِحْسَانِ وَ اِيْتَآئِ ذِي الْقُرْبٰى وَ يَنْهٰى عَنِ الْفَحْشَآءِ وَ الْمُنْكَرِ وَ الْبَغْيِ ۚ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُوْنَ. (۱۶:۹۰)

God enjoins you to justice, goodness and spending on the kindred, and forbids lewdness, evil and arrogance. He admonishes you so that you may take heed. (16:90)

The succeeding verses are actually an explanation of the above cited verse. Readers may now proceed to study them.

Text and Translation

لَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ فَتَقْعُدَ مَذْمُوْمًا مَّخْذُوْلًا ﴿۲۲﴾ وَقَضٰى رَبُّكَ اَلَّا تَعْبُدُوْٓا اِلَّآ اِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ اِحْسَانًا ؕ اِمَّا يَبْلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ اَحَدُهُمَآ اَوْ كِلٰهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَّهُمَآ اُفٍّ وَّلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَّهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيْمًا ﴿۲۳﴾ وَاخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَّبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيٰنِيْ صَغِيْرًا ﴿۲۴﴾ رَبُّكُمْ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِيْ نُفُوْسِكُمْ ؕ اِنْ

22. Indeed, this Qur'ān shows the way which is absolutely straight and gives glad tidings to the believers who do righteous deeds that for them is a great reward and those who do not believe in the Hereafter, for them We have prepared a painful torment.

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تَكُوْنُوْا صٰلِحِيْنَ فَاِنَّهٗ كَانَ لِلْاَوَّابِيْنَ غَفُوْرًا ﴿٢٥﴾ وَاٰتِ ذَا الْقُرْبٰى حَقَّهٗ وَالْمِسْكِيْنَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيْلِ وَلَا تُبَذِّرْ
تَبْذِيْرًا ﴿٢٦﴾ اِنَّ الْمُبَذِّرِيْنَ كَانُوْٓا اِخْوَانَ الشَّيٰطِيْنِ ۭ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطٰنُ لِرَبِّهٖ كَفُوْرًا ﴿٢٧﴾ وَاِمَّا تُعْرِضَنَّ عَنْهُمُ
ابْتِغَاۗءَ رَحْمَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ تَرْجُوْهَا فَقُلْ لَّهُمْ قَوْلًا مَّيْسُوْرًا ﴿٢٨﴾ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُوْلَةً اِلٰى عُنُقِكَ وَلَا
تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ فَتَقْعُدَ مَلُوْمًا مَّحْسُوْرًا ﴿٢٩﴾ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ وَيَقْدِرُ ۭ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهٖ
خَبِيْرًۢا بَصِيْرًا ﴿٣٠﴾ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوْٓا اَوْلَادَكُمْ خَشْيَةَ اِمْلَاقٍ ۭ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُهُمْ وَاِيَّاكُمْ ۭ اِنَّ قَتْلَهُمْ كَانَ خِطْاً كَبِيْرًا ﴿٣١﴾
وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزِّنٰٓى اِنَّهٗ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً ۭ وَسَاۗءَ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٣٢﴾ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِيْ حَرَّمَ اللّٰهُ اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ۭ وَمَنْ
قُتِلَ مَظْلُوْمًا فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لِوَلِيِّهٖ سُلْطٰنًا فَلَا يُسْرِفْ فِّي الْقَتْلِ ۭ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ مَنْصُوْرًا ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوْا مَالَ
الْيَتِيْمِ اِلَّا بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ اَحْسَنُ حَتّٰى يَبْلُغَ اَشُدَّهٗ ۠ وَاَوْفُوْا بِالْعَهْدِ ۚ اِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْـُٔوْلًا ﴿٣٤﴾ وَاَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ
اِذَا كِلْتُمْ وَزِنُوْا بِالْقِسْطَاسِ الْمُسْتَقِيْمِ ۭ ذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَّاَحْسَنُ تَاْوِيْلًا ﴿٣٥﴾ وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهٖ عِلْمٌ ۭ اِنَّ
السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْـُٔوْلًا ﴿٣٦﴾ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْاَرْضِ مَرَحًا ۚ اِنَّكَ لَنْ تَخْرِقَ الْاَرْضَ
وَلَنْ تَبْلُغَ الْجِبَالَ طُوْلًا ﴿٣٧﴾ كُلُّ ذٰلِكَ كَانَ سَيِّئُهٗ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ مَكْرُوْهًا ﴿٣٨﴾ ذٰلِكَ مِمَّآ اَوْحٰٓى اِلَيْكَ رَبُّكَ مِنَ
الْحِكْمَةِ ۭ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ فَتُلْقٰى فِيْ جَهَنَّمَ مَلُوْمًا مَّدْحُوْرًا ﴿٣٩﴾

Serve no other deity except God, lest you are left blameworthy and ill-fated. And it is the verdict of your Lord to worship none but Him and to treat your parents very well. If either or both of them attain old age before you, show them no sign of impatience, nor scold them and speak to them with decency, and with softness lower arms of tenderness on them and keep praying: "Lord! be merciful to them the way they nursed me in childhood." Your Lord fully knows what is in your hearts. If you remain obedient, He is very forgiving to those who turn to Him. (22-25)

And give to the near of kin his due, and also to the destitute and the traveller. And do not squander your wealth wastefully, for the wasteful are brothers of devils; and the Devil is extremely ungrateful to his Lord. And while waiting for your Lord's bounty which you are hopeful of, if you have to ignore them, then speak to them softly. And neither tie your hand with your neck nor leave it totally loose that you earn reproach and be reduced to indigence. Indeed, it is your Lord Who gives abundantly to whomsoever He pleases and sparingly to whomsoever He pleases. Indeed, He is aware of His servants and observes them. (26-30)

And do not kill your children for fear of poverty. It is We provide for them also and for you as well. Killing them is indeed a heinous crime. And do not even go near

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adultery because it is blatant lewdness and a very evil path. And do not wrongfully kill any person whose life has been held sacred by God and he who is slain unjustly, We have given his guardian the authority. Then he should not exceed limits in killing because he has been helped. And do not even go near the wealth of an orphan except in a way that is better for him until he reaches his age of maturity. And keep your promises because you shall be held accountable for promises. And when you measure give full measure, and weigh with correct scales. This is better and fairer as far as the consequences are concerned. And do not go after what you know not because ears, eyes and heart – each of them shall be questioned. And do not walk arrogantly on the earth; neither can you split apart the earth, nor can you reach the height of the mountains. The evil of each of these things to your Lord is very displeasing. (31-38)

These are from the counsels of wisdom which your Lord has revealed to you. And serve no other deity besides God, lest you should be cast into Hell blameworthy and condemned.[23] (39)

Explanation

لَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ فَتَقْعُدَ مَذْمُوْمًا مَّخْذُوْلًا ﴿۳۹﴾[24]

It has been explained at a number of instances in this exegesis that at times

23. The way almost all these things are mentioned in the Torah is worth knowing. Their necessary part is cited below:

> The LORD said to Moses, Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy. 'Each of you must respect your mother and father, and you must observe my Sabbaths. I am the LORD your God. Do not turn to idols or make metal gods for yourselves. I am the LORD your God. When you sacrifice a fellowship offering to the LORD, sacrifice it in such a way that it will be accepted on your behalf … When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the LORD your God. Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not deceive one another. Do not swear falsely by my name and so profane the name of your God. I am the LORD. Do not defraud or rob your neighbor. Do not hold back the wages of a hired worker overnight. Do not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind, but fear your God. I am the LORD. Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly. Do not go about spreading slander among your people. Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor's life. I am the LORD. Do not hate a fellow Israelite in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in their guilt. Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your as yourself. I am the LORD. Keep my decrees. (Leviticus, 19, 1-19)

24. Serve no other deity except God, lest you are left blameworthy and ill-fated.

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addressing singular entities also connotes addressing plural ones. In this case, it is as if each and every person of a group is spoken to. Here too, the same style is adopted. Thus in the middle of these section of verses, the plural address is also used that evidences the actual nature of address. In this regard, if the Prophet (sws) has also been addressed somewhere, it is in his capacity of the leader of the believers and the address is not specific to him.

The word فَتَقْعُدَ here has the same meaning as other incomplete verbs as فَتَكُوْنَ and فَتَصِيْرَ.

This verse forms the basic statute of the justice and straight path the Qur'ān invites people to: since only God is the master and giver of livelihood, people should not associate others with Him in His rights and in His divinity as this would be against justice and an oppressive practice. It is for this reason that the Qur'ān (31:13) has termed polytheism as a great injustice.

The words "lest you are left blameworthy and ill-fated" depict the consequence of associating someone with God. The locus (*ẓarf*) of فَتَقْعُدَ is يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ which is suppressed here. In other words, people themselves will be responsible of this fate. Not only will their alleged deities not help them, they will go on to curse them.

وَقَضٰى رَبُّكَ اَلَّا تَعْبُدُوْٓا اِلَّآ اِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ اِحْسَانًا ؕ اِمَّا يَبْلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ اَحَدُهُمَآ اَوْ كِلٰهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَّهُمَآ اُفٍّ وَّلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَّهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيْمًا ﴿۲۳﴾[25]

The verse implies that it is the prerogative of God to inform mankind if anyone shares His rights or not. Thus He has informed them that they cannot share anyone in them and only worship Him. After God, if there is anyone who has the greatest right, it is the parents. This is because they are the means of a person's coming into existence and his nurturing. But God has not allowed him to associate even them with Him in worship. His obligation towards them, in fact, is that he treats them with kindness. The word اِحْسَانًا is a stressed object from a suppressed verb and would mean that parents should be treated with ultimate kindness. The context of the discourse here shows of its own accord that if there was a possibility for anyone to be associated with God, it was the parents. But when God did not allow them, how can any other being be allowed.

The word اُفّ expresses aversion of the heart and نَهَرَ means "to scold someone." The sentence "If either or both of them attain old age before you, show them no sign of impatience, nor scold them and speak to them with decency" actually explains the kind treatment referred to by the first part of the verse.

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25. And it is the verdict of your Lord to worship none but Him and to treat your parents very well. If either or both of them attain old age before you, show them no sign of impatience, nor scold them and speak to them with decency.

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Old age has been specifically mentioned in the verse because it is this period in which people regard their parents to be a burden and forget their sacrifices and selfless behaviour in their childhood. Obedient and respectful children remember that the way they were once nurtured by their parents when they were nothing but a lump of meat and bones, in a similar manner, their parents have now been consigned to them when they are no more than skeletons; it is now their duty to repay them their favours. However, not everyone remembers this. These verses are in fact a reminder for this reality. In fact, the truth is that parents deserve love, respect and good behaviour whatever their age.

Here is may be kept in mind that just as the previous verse refers to the greatest justice, in this verse the greatest act of kindness is mentioned and is the second pillar of foundational teachings of the Qur'ān.

وَاخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَّبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيٰنِيْ صَغِيْرًا ﴿٢٤﴾[26]

The word ذُلّ means "obedience" and "compliance." The metaphorical use of the word جَنَاح for it carries subtle insinuation: just as parents hide and protect their children the way birds do under their wings, in a similar manner, children too should hide and protect their parents in their wings of love and obedience. By qualifying this obedience with the words مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ its origin and motive is pointed to: it should arise from love and affection for them; no other motive should be present. This is because if they can be repaid to some extent for their love and affection, then it is through sentiments of love and affection. Without these sentiments, no person can discharge his obligation towards his parents in a worthy manner.

The supplication referred to in the verse is a right of the parents. It also reminds a person of the rights of his parents imposed on him and it is also a motive of the emotions of love and affection that are needed in dealing with them.

رَبُّكُمْ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا فِيْ نُفُوْسِكُمْ ؕ اِنْ تَكُوْنُوْا صٰلِحِيْنَ فَاِنَّهٗ كَانَ لِلْاَوَّابِيْنَ غَفُوْرًا ﴿٢٥﴾[27]

It is not an easy task at all to treat old parents with love and affection the way the Qur'ān has directed its followers. It is not merely outward compliance with their parents which is demanded from them. In fact, purity of heart, inner warmth and fondness is also demanded from them. It is because of this difficulty that the Qur'ān has explained the real thing required is inner love and full compliance. If this is present, then God is fully aware of what is in the hearts. With its presence, if some minor mistake emanates by accident, then it can be atoned by repentance and turning towards God. People who

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26. And with softness lower arms of tenderness on them and keep praying: "Lord! be merciful to them the way they nursed me in childhood."

27. Your Lord fully knows what is in your hearts. If you remain obedient, He is very forgiving to those who turn to Him.

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continue to ask for forgiveness on such mistakes will be forgiven by Him.

وَ اٰتِ ذَا الْقُرْبٰى حَقَّهٗ وَ الْمِسْكِيْنَ وَ ابْنَ السَّبِيْلِ وَ لَا تُبَذِّرْ تَبْذِيْرًا ﴿۲۶﴾ اِنَّ الْمُبَذِّرِيْنَ كَانُوْۤا اِخْوَانَ الشَّيٰطِيْنِ ؕ وَ كَانَ الشَّيْطٰنُ لِرَبِّهٖ كَفُوْرًا ﴿۲۷﴾[28]

This verse states the third foundational directive. The word حَقّ (right) used here shows that the responsibility stated is not just a moral one; it is an obligation that must be fulfilled by every person who has wealth. If a person does not discharge this right, he will be regarded as guilty of violating rights.

After kinfolk, the second level is occupied by the needy. Kinfolk become worthy of this right merely on the basis of kinship. For the needy, it is merely their need that makes them eligible for this. If a person who is needy also belongs to a person's kinfolk, then his right will be two fold. Moreover, a mention of the needy right after the kinfolk also shows their status and rank in an Islamic society. Next, travellers are mentioned. It is obvious that a traveller becomes eligible just because he is travelling; it is not essential that he be in need, otherwise, there was no need to mention him separately. There is no doubt that travelling in itself is a state that makes a person eligible for help even if a person is not a needy in the juristic sense.

It is also obvious that when others have a right in the wealth of a person, he cannot have the permission of squandering his wealth. The right attitude in this regard is that a person should spend with moderation and caution on his permissible needs and regard himself to be responsible for the remaining wealth towards fulfilling the needs of others. A person who is not cautious and moderate regarding his needs will always be engrossed in fulfilling his own needs while disregarding others.

An obvious right imposed on a person who is blessed with God's favours is to be grateful to Him and to spend only on things which please Him. However, Satan lures people to his ways and makes them spend on things which take them further away from God and nearer to his own self.

وَ اِمَّا تُعْرِضَنَّ عَنْهُمُ ابْتِغَآءَ رَحْمَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ تَرْجُوْهَا فَقُلْ لَّهُمْ قَوْلًا مَّيْسُوْرًا ﴿۲۸﴾[29]

This is verse provides guidance to people in the case when they are not in a position to fulfil the rights just mentioned.

وَ لَا تَجْعَلْ يَدَكَ مَغْلُوْلَةً اِلٰى عُنُقِكَ وَ لَا تَبْسُطْهَا كُلَّ الْبَسْطِ فَتَقْعُدَ مَلُوْمًا مَّحْسُوْرًا ﴿۲۹﴾[30]

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28. And give to the near of kin his due, and also to the destitute and the traveller. And do not squander your wealth wastefully, for the wasteful are brothers of devils; and the Devil is extremely ungrateful to his Lord.

29. And while waiting for your Lord's bounty which you are hopeful of, if you have to ignore them, then speak to them softly.

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Tying one's hands to one's neck signifies extreme stinginess and leaving them loose signifies squandering wealth.

Earlier in verses 26-27, prohibition of squandering wealth is mentioned. Here the balanced attitude in this regard is explained to dispel any misconceptions: a person should spend with moderation on his permissible needs and also fulfil the rights of others. The word تَقْعُدَ here is in the same meaning as verse 22. The implication is that the consequence of this attitude will be such that a person will end up blameworthy of not being able to fulfil the rights of others because of indigence.

اِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَقْدِرُ ۭ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهٖ خَبِيْرًۢا بَصِيْرًا ﴿٣٠﴾[31]

Here after يَقْدِرُ the words لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ are suppressed as well because of concomitant indications.

This verse explains that the constriction or abundance in wealth is not dependent on the plans of a person. It is dependent entirely on God's will and wisdom. He is fully aware of the wealth of His people and also watches over them. The right attitude in this regard is that a person should cautiously spend on his own needs and also fulfil the rights of others. He should not take any step that is against moderation.

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوْٓا اَوْلَادَكُمْ خَشْيَةَ اِمْلَاقٍ ۭ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُهُمْ وَاِيَّاكُمْ ۭ اِنَّ قَتْلَهُمْ كَانَ خِطْاً كَبِيْرًا ﴿٣١﴾[32]

What is stated in this verse is a corollary of what is mentioned in the previous one: when God is the real sustainer, who has the right to kill someone fearing poverty. The verse alludes to the evil Arab custom of burying alive infant girls in the time of *jāhiliyyah*. The psyche behind this was that since a woman was not an earning member of the family, one should not have to bear the burden of her up-bringing. The Qur'ān here has struck a blow at the real motive of this heinous crime and ended this barbarity. The campaign of family planning on going in current times and to implement which all kinds of new suggestions are being floated may not be barbarous in the apparent form; however, its underlying philosophy is the same as the one found in the barbarity of the Arab *jāhiliyyah*. Like those times, today also a society thinks that it sustains and nourishes people. The Qur'ān has clarified that the real sustainer is God. The savage Arabs understood this fact and also reformed themselves but who can make the uncouth intelligentsia of today understand it?

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30. And neither tie your hand with your neck nor leave it totally loose that you earn reproach and be reduced to indigence.

31. Indeed, it is your Lord Who gives abundantly to whomsoever He pleases and sparingly to whomsoever He pleases. Indeed, He is aware of His servants and observes them.

32. And do not kill your children for fear of poverty. It is We provide for them also and for you as well. Killing them is indeed a heinous crime.

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وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الزِّنٰٓى اِنَّهٗ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً ؕ وَسَآءَ سَبِيْلًا ﴿۳۲﴾[33]

Until verse 31, the things urged and asserted by the Qur'ān in verse 90 of Sūrah al-Naḥl – justice, goodness and spending on the kindred – have been dealt with. In the succeeding verses, the things proscribed – lewdness, evil and rebelliousness – are discussed.

Among the proscribed things, adultery is mentioned the foremost because this evil destroys the roots of a righteous society. The institution of family is the basis of such a society. A righteous family based on natural sentiments can only come into being when the relationship of the children with their parents is based on true lineage and pure blood ties. If these things are not present, then a family is not a family; it is rather a herd of animals devoid of natural and spiritual sentiments. A herd of animals can never lay the foundations of a righteous society nor become a forerunner to it.

Because of these evils, the Qur'ān has placed adultery the foremost among the prohibited things. It has stopped people from it in words such that all motives and factors leading to it are abstained from. Thus the words it uses are "do not even go near adultery." It means that people should stay away from things that may induce them to indulge in this shameful act. Here only a principle statement is given; for this reason, no details are given. Details will come in Sūrah al-Nūr which is the last *sūrah* of this chapter. While explaining it, I will, God willing, elucidate the things which the Qur'ān has prohibited because they lead a person to it.

The words "because it is blatant lewdness and a very evil path" state the reason for its prohibition. In other words, no logic is needed to prove its shameful nature. It is a universally acknowledged vulgarity. Ever since time immemorial, mankind has not condoned extra-marital relations between men and women. Strong restrictions have always been imposed on it and those who indulged in them were always looked down upon. The words "evil path" refer to the fact that it is a deviant way from the one which the Qur'ān is calling people to. People who tread this path end up uprooting the foundations of an upright family, an upright society and ultimately an upright government.

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِيْ حَرَّمَ اللّٰهُ اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ؕ وَمَنْ قُتِلَ مَظْلُوْمًا فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لِوَلِيِّهٖ سُلْطٰنًا فَلَا يُسْرِفْ فِّي الْقَتْلِ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ مَنْصُوْرًا ﴿۳۳﴾[34]

In other words, a person can only be killed when the *sharī'ah* orders for his killing because of some crime. If anyone is killed without such a legal basis, then it would be

33. And do not even go near adultery because it is blatant lewdness and a very evil path.

34. And do not wrongfully kill any person whose life has been held sacred by God and he who is slain unjustly, We have given his guardian the authority. Then he should not exceed limits in killing because he has been helped.

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great injustice. In such a case, the heirs of the victim have full authority to either take *qiṣāṣ* or *diyat* or even forgive the perpetrator. Giving full authority to them means that the government shall necessarily implement the will of the heirs in this regard. The words "then he should not exceed limits in killing because he has been helped" provide guidance to the heirs of the victim: since they have the support of the government, it is not permissible for them that they exceed limits in taking revenge. For example, if they kill others too besides the murderer or adopt ways of killing that are prohibited by God like burning or mutilating the corpse.

Also evident from this verse is that in Islamic law, the real claimants in murder are the heirs of the victim and not the government. The only job of the latter is to correctly enforce the will of the former. A government is a claimant in only those cases when a victim does not have heirs or he has heirs but for some reason they are disinterested in the cause of the victim. In existing laws, the government has the sole right. The heirs have no say whatsoever. In my opinion, these existing laws are devoid of many blessings provided by Islamic law. I have discussed this issue in detail in another book.[35] Repeating it here would be needless.

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوْا مَالَ الْيَتِيْمِ اِلَّا بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ اَحْسَنُ حَتّٰى يَبْلُغَ اَشُدَّهٗ ۪ وَاَوْفُوْا بِالْعَهْدِ ۚ اِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْـُٔوْلًا ﴿۳۴﴾[36]

Earlier the emphatic manner in which people have been stopped from adultery and its allurements, here they are stopped in the same manner from dispensing the wealth of orphans in an unjust way. Only that intervention of their guardians in their wealth is permissible which is done for their upbringing, development and protection. Any other intervention is tantamount to embezzlement because this wealth is a trust in the hands of the guardians.

This protection provided by guardians should only be until the orphans reach maturity. As soon as they do so, they are in charge of their wealth and they must hand it over to them.

Together with the directive of prohibition of being dishonest in the wealth of the orphans, prohibition is also sounded regarding other covenants and promises.

Included in these covenants are all types of promises whether they are written or naturally understood. Whatever their nature, if they are not against the *sharī'ah*, they must be fulfilled. In the explanation of Sūrah al-Mā'idah, I have stated that the *sharī'ah* itself is a covenant between God and His creatures. The continued existence of an upright family, an upright society and an upright government depends on fulfilling these covenants that

35. Reference is to his book *Islāmi Riyāsat mayn Fiqhī Ikhtilāfāt awr un ka Ḥal* (Juristic Differences and how to resolve them in an Islamic State).

36. And do not even go near the wealth of an orphan except in a way that is better for him until he reaches his age of maturity. And keep your promises because you shall be held accountable for promises.

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وَاَوۡفُوا الۡكَيۡلَ اِذَا كِلۡتُمۡ وَزِنُوۡا بِالۡقِسۡطَاسِ الۡمُسۡتَقِيۡمِ ؕ ذٰلِكَ خَيۡرٌ وَّاَحۡسَنُ تَاۡوِيۡلًا ﴿۳۵﴾[37]

It needs to be noted that when a nation which takes to dishonesty and deceit in weighing and measuring, then seemingly a few of its individuals may end up earning profit in their own consideration; however, in fact, they raze down the foundation of truthfulness and justice which guarantees the continued existence of an upright society.

وَلَا تَقۡفُ مَا لَيۡسَ لَكَ بِهٖ عِلۡمٌ ؕ اِنَّ السَّمۡعَ وَالۡبَصَرَ وَالۡفُؤَادَ كُلُّ اُولٰٓئِكَ كَانَ عَنۡهُ مَسۡـُٔوۡلًا ﴿۳۶﴾[38]

The words قفوته قفوت إثره means "I came following it." The verse stops people from following conjectures about things they have no knowledge.

This verse prohibits blaming and slandering people. The society which the Qur'an wants to create is founded on trust and giving others the benefit of the doubt. For this reason, a person should not say things that are based on conjecture or rumour that can damage the repute of a person.

وَلَا تَمۡشِ فِى الۡاَرۡضِ مَرَحًا ۚ اِنَّكَ لَنۡ تَخۡرِقَ الۡاَرۡضَ وَلَنۡ تَبۡلُغَ الۡجِبَالَ طُوۡلًا ﴿۳۷﴾[39]

The word مَرَح means "to walk arrogantly." A person who walks in this manner, walks while stamping his feet on earth and raising his neck high. The implication of the verse is that the God whose glory and grandeur one witnesses in the vast expanse of the earth that He has spread out on which one's status is not even that of an ant or an insect and the God who has created these towering mountains before which one's status is not even that of a squirrel, what is the meaning of being arrogant before Him? One should try to recognize one's status and always surrender oneself to the majesty and splendour of God.

It needs to be kept in mind that this external mannerism of a person reflects his inner-self. It is a proof of the fact that such a person has no conception of God's power and majesty. People who have this conception are humble and down to earth. Instead of walking arrogantly, they humbly walk with their heads bowed down.

كُلُّ ذٰلِكَ كَانَ سَيِّئُهٗ عِنۡدَ رَبِّكَ مَكۡرُوۡهًا ﴿۳۸﴾[40]

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37. And when you measure give full measure, and weigh with correct scales. This is better and fairer as far as the consequences are concerned.

38. And do not go after what you know not because ears, eyes and heart – each of them shall be questioned.

39. And do not walk arrogantly on the earth; neither can you split apart the earth, nor can you reach the height of the mountains.

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This is a reference to everything that it said above. The word مَكْرُوْهًا is not spoken in the juristic sense. It is used in its literal meaning implying that a person who is guilty of any of them will end up hated by the Almighty.

ذٰلِكَ مِمَّآ اَوْحٰٓى اِلَيْكَ رَبُّكَ مِنَ الْحِكْمَةِ ؕ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ فَتُلْقٰى فِىْ جَهَنَّمَ مَلُوْمًا مَّدْحُوْرًا ﴿۳۹﴾[41]

The word ذٰلِكَ points to all what is said earlier. All of them are a part of wisdom. In other words, they are sound and abiding truths which have strong foundations in a person's intellect, nature and in the *sharī'ah*. God is informing people of them through His messenger so that they can lead their lives on sound footings.

Here, at the end, the topic of monotheism is once again reminded of. It was also discussed in verse 22 from where this section of verses actually began. It is as if it is being said that as long as this wall formed of monotheism that encircles these teachings is intact, the teachings themselves are intact. There are a number of instances in the Qur'ān where the teachings it mentions begin and end with monotheism. In fact, such examples are also found in the Torah. Had it not been to keep the discussion concise, I would have referred them here.

Section V (Verses 40-57)

In the succeeding verses, the real reason for the aversion of the disbelievers of the Quraysh is pointed out. Since they were not willing to giving up their self-claimed deities and accept the hereafter, they had this dislike for the Qur'ān and the Prophet (sws). In this regard, as a parenthetical sentence, Muslims are directed to show wisdom and sagacity in preaching. While reacting to the attitude of their rivals, they should not utter any such word that may further increase their aversion.

Readers may now proceed to study these verses.

Text and Translation

اَفَاَصْفٰىكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِالْبَنِيْنَ وَاتَّخَذَ مِنَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنَاثًا ؕ اِنَّكُمْ لَتَقُوْلُوْنَ قَوْلًا عَظِيْمًا ﴿۴۰﴾ وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِىْ هٰذَا
الْقُرْاٰنِ لِيَذَّكَّرُوْا ؕ وَمَا يَزِيْدُهُمْ اِلَّا نُفُوْرًا ﴿۴۱﴾ قُلْ لَّوْ كَانَ مَعَهٗٓ اٰلِهَةٌ كَمَا يَقُوْلُوْنَ اِذًا لَّابْتَغَوْا اِلٰى ذِى الْعَرْشِ
سَبِيْلًا ﴿۴۲﴾ سُبْحٰنَهٗ وَتَعٰلٰى عَمَّا يَقُوْلُوْنَ عُلُوًّا كَبِيْرًا ﴿۴۳﴾ تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمٰوٰتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْاَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيْهِنَّ ؕ وَ
اِنْ مِّنْ شَىْءٍ اِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهٖ وَلٰكِنْ لَّا تَفْقَهُوْنَ تَسْبِيْحَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ حَلِيْمًا غَفُوْرًا ﴿۴۴﴾ وَاِذَا قَرَاْتَ

40. The evil of each of these things to your Lord is very displeasing.

41. These are from the counsels of wisdom which your Lord has revealed to you. And serve no other deity besides God, lest you should be cast into Hell blameworthy and condemned.

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الْقُرْاٰنَ جَعَلْنَا بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ حِجَابًا مَّسْتُوْرًا ﴿٤٥﴾ وَّ جَعَلْنَا عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ اَكِنَّةً
اَنْ يَّفْقَهُوْهُ وَ فِيْٓ اٰذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا ؕ وَ اِذَا ذَكَرْتَ رَبَّكَ فِي الْقُرْاٰنِ وَحْدَهٗ وَلَّوْا عَلٰٓى اَدْبَارِهِمْ نُفُوْرًا ﴿٤٦﴾ نَحْنُ اَعْلَمُ
بِمَا يَسْتَمِعُوْنَ بِهٖٓ اِذْ يَسْتَمِعُوْنَ اِلَيْكَ وَاِذْ هُمْ نَجْوٰٓى اِذْ يَقُوْلُ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ اِنْ تَتَّبِعُوْنَ اِلَّا رَجُلًا مَّسْحُوْرًا ﴿٤٧﴾
اُنْظُرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوْا لَكَ الْاَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوْا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٤٨﴾ وَ قَالُوْٓا ءَاِذَا كُنَّا عِظَامًا وَّ رُفَاتًا ءَاِنَّا
لَمَبْعُوْثُوْنَ خَلْقًا جَدِيْدًا ﴿٤٩﴾ قُلْ كُوْنُوْا حِجَارَةً اَوْ حَدِيْدًا ﴿٥٠﴾ اَوْ خَلْقًا مِّمَّا يَكْبُرُ فِيْ صُدُوْرِكُمْ ۚ فَسَيَقُوْلُوْنَ مَنْ
يُّعِيْدُنَا ؕ قُلِ الَّذِيْ فَطَرَكُمْ اَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ ۚ فَسَيُنْغِضُوْنَ اِلَيْكَ رُءُوْسَهُمْ وَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ مَتٰى هُوَ ؕ قُلْ عَسٰٓى اَنْ يَّكُوْنَ
قَرِيْبًا ﴿٥١﴾ يَوْمَ يَدْعُوْكُمْ فَتَسْتَجِيْبُوْنَ بِحَمْدِهٖ وَتَظُنُّوْنَ اِنْ لَّبِثْتُمْ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿٥٢﴾ وَقُلْ لِّعِبَادِيْ يَقُوْلُوا الَّتِيْ هِيَ
اَحْسَنُ ؕ اِنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ يَنْزَغُ بَيْنَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ كَانَ لِلْاِنْسَانِ عَدُوًّا مُّبِيْنًا ﴿٥٣﴾ رَبُّكُمْ اَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ ؕ اِنْ يَّشَاْ
يَرْحَمْكُمْ اَوْ اِنْ يَّشَاْ يُعَذِّبْكُمْ ؕ وَ مَآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكِيْلًا ﴿٥٤﴾ وَ رَبُّكَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ ؕ وَ لَقَدْ
فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَ النَّبِيّٖنَ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ وَّ اٰتَيْنَا دَاوٗدَ زَبُوْرًا ﴿٥٥﴾ قُلِ ادْعُوا الَّذِيْنَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِهٖ فَلَا يَمْلِكُوْنَ كَشْفَ
الضُّرِّ عَنْكُمْ وَ لَا تَحْوِيْلًا ﴿٥٦﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ يَبْتَغُوْنَ اِلٰى رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيْلَةَ اَيُّهُمْ اَقْرَبُ وَ يَرْجُوْنَ رَحْمَتَهٗ وَ
يَخَافُوْنَ عَذَابَهٗ ؕ اِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ كَانَ مَحْذُوْرًا ﴿٥٧﴾

Has your Lord reserved sons for you and taken daughters from angels for Himself? This is something very grave that you say. And We have explained in this Qur'ān in a variety of ways so that they receive a reminder. However, this is only increasing their aversion. Say: If there had been other deities with God as these people claim, they would have definitely sought to dethrone Him. He is pure and far above what they say. The seven heavens, the earth and whatever they contain all glorify Him only, and there is nothing which does not praise Him while glorifying Him, yet you do not understand their glorification. Indeed, He is very Benevolent and most Forgiving. (40-44)

And when you recite out the Qur'ān, We place an unseen barrier between you and those people who do not believe in the Hereafter and put a cover on their hearts and make them hard of hearing so that they may not understand or hear it. And when you mention your Lord alone in the Qur'ān, they turn away in hatred. And We know full well when they listen to you the reason they listen to you and when they whisper to one another when these unjust say: "You people are only following a person who is under a spell." See what sarcasm they heap on you. These people have lost their way. They are not finding any way. (45-48)

And they say: "When we become bones and are reduced to bits, we will be raised to

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life again?" Say: Whether you become stones or iron or any other substance which in your view is even harder than them. Then they will say: "Who will give us life again?" Say: He who created you the first time. Then they will shake their heads before you and ask: "When would this happen?" Say: It may well be that its time is near. The day He calls you, you will obey His directive while praising Him and you will think that you stayed for only a short while. (49-52)

And tell My servants: Say only that which is better. Indeed, Satan keeps implanting evil suggestions among them. Indeed, Satan is an open enemy of human beings. Your Lord knows you full well. If He wants, He will show mercy to you or if He desires, He will afflict you with a torment. And We have not sent you to be responsible for them. And your Lord knows full well what is in the heavens and earth. And We have given superiority to some prophets over others and We gave the Psalms to David. (53-55)

Say: Try to invoke those whom you regard as deities besides God. Neither will they be able to ward off any calamity from you nor defer it. Those whom they invoke themselves fervently try to find their Lord's nearness as to who among them could become the nearest. And they look forward to their Lord's mercy and fear His torment. Indeed, the torment of your Lord is a thing to be feared. (56-57)

Explanation

اَفَاَصْفٰىكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِالْبَنِيْنَ وَاتَّخَذَ مِنَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنَاثًا ؕ اِنَّكُمْ لَتَقُوْلُوْنَ قَوْلًا عَظِيْمًا ﴿۴۰﴾[42]

The word إصفاء means to "to choose someone or something exclusively."

The earlier section of verses ended on a refutation of polytheism. Here this topic is taken up again in a new style. It may be kept in mind that the Idolaters of Arabia regarded angels to be the daughters of God and would worship them with the motive that they intercede for them before their father. Here God has directed their attention to their compounded foolishness.

The words "this is something very grave that you say" imply that what they say is not mere foolishness; it is foolishness after foolishness: they choose for God what they do not like for their own selves. In other words, they have demoted God to even below their own status.

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِيْ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ لِيَذَّكَّرُوْا ؕ وَمَا يَزِيْدُهُمْ اِلَّا نُفُوْرًا ﴿۴۱﴾[43]

The word تصريف means "to circulate." Here it means to explain the reality in different styles and multiple ways. Thus, for example, the topic of monotheism has been mentioned in the Qur'ān in so many different styles that the most thick-headed

42. Has your Lord reserved sons for you and taken daughters from angels for Himself? This is something very grave that you say.

43. And We have explained in this Qur'ān in a variety of ways so that they receive a reminder. However, this is only increasing their aversion.

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of persons, if he is not stubborn, can fully understand it. However, people who are stubborn and belligerent and are not willing to accept the truth, become more averse to what is being told them the more it is clarified. This is because they take this clarification to be their defeat and humiliation.

قُلْ لَّوْ كَانَ مَعَهٗٓ اٰلِهَةٌ كَمَا يَقُوْلُوْنَ اِذًا لَّابْتَغَوْا اِلٰى ذِى الْعَرْشِ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٤٢﴾[44]

By analogy to the kings and kingdoms of this world, the Idolaters of Arabia regarded God to be the supreme deity and a king having a crown and a throne. They believed in many other deities too but regarded them to be subservient to God. They believed that these deities share God's divinity and become a means of procuring God's nearness for those who worship them. This verse refutes this very belief they held.

The implication of the verse is that if they regard God's kingdom to be analogous to their own earthly kingdoms, they can observe that every now and then they break and new ones form. In a similar way, if God also had partners, why would they have sat peacefully? Why would they have not forced their way to defeat the supreme God? Yet, in this world they see that neither the sun leaves its path nor the earth its orbit. At another instance, this fact is stated thus: لَوْ كَانَ فِيْهِمَآ اٰلِهَةٌ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ لَفَسَدَتَا (٢١:٢٢) (were there other gods in the sky and earth besides God, they would have become disrupted, (21:22)).

سُبْحٰنَهٗ وَتَعٰلٰى عَمَّا يَقُوْلُوْنَ عُلُوًّا كَبِيْرًا ﴿٤٣﴾[45]

The implication of this verse is that God is beyond these foolish conjectures they make about Him. These speculations have no link with His higher attributes.

تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمٰوٰتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْاَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيْهِنَّ ؕ وَاِنْ مِّنْ شَىْءٍ اِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهٖ وَلٰكِنْ لَّا تَفْقَهُوْنَ تَسْبِيْحَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ حَلِيْمًا غَفُوْرًا ﴿٤٤﴾[46]

The real meaning of تسبیح is to absolve someone of negative traits. In other words, it absolves God of all those ascriptions which contradict His splendour and His majestic attributes. If it is qualified by the word حمد, then the purpose is to affirm all higher attributes in Him.

The implication is that God has blessed people with the freedom to exercise their will in a certain sphere. By misusing this freedom, they can heap whatever accusations

44. Say: If there had been other deities with God as these people claim, they would have definitely sought to dethrone Him.

45. He is pure and far above what they say.

46. The seven heavens, the earth and whatever they contain all glorify Him only, and there is nothing which does not praise Him while glorifying Him, yet you do not understand their glorification. Indeed, He is very Benevolent and most Forgiving.

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on God they want to. However, the seven heavens and the earth and all the creatures found between them all glorify God though they may not understand this.

Such is the grave nature of their ascribing partners to God that the heavens would have fallen on them. Yet God is very benevolent and forgiving. In spite of their misdeeds, He is continuing to give them respite.

وَاِذَا قَرَاْتَ الْقُرْاٰنَ جَعَلْنَا بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ حِجَابًا مَّسْتُوْرًا ﴿٤٥﴾[47]

This words dispels the wonder at why in spite of something being repeated in the Qur'ān in various styles and ways, as pointed out be verse 41, these people are not being able to understand it. And why are these people in awe because of it.

وَّجَعَلْنَا عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ اَكِنَّةً اَنْ يَّفْقَهُوْهُ وَفِيْٓ اٰذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا ؕ وَاِذَا ذَكَرْتَ رَبَّكَ فِى الْقُرْاٰنِ وَحْدَهٗ وَلَّوْا عَلٰٓى اَدْبَارِهِمْ نُفُوْرًا ﴿٤٦﴾[48]

The word اَكِنَّةً is the plural of اكنان and means "a covering." The expression اَنْ يَّفْقَهُوْهُ is actually كَرَاهَةَ اَنْ يَّفْقَهُوْهُ. In other words, a governing noun is suppressed before اَنْ. After the words فِيْٓ اٰذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا, there is a suppression of اَنْ يَسْمَعُوْهُ, as evidenced by concomitant indications.

This verse is actually a further explanation of the previous one. The last part indicates the second reason for their aversion: like the hereafter, these people also have a dislike for monotheism. For this reason, as soon as they hear the Qur'ān, they turn and flee away.

The fact their hearts have a covering and they have become hard of hearing is actually a reference to the established practice of God mentioned under verse 7 of Sūrah al-Baqarah. It mentions why their hearts are sealed from accepting guidance. Readers can look up its explanation. Reproducing it here will only lengthen the discussion.

نَحْنُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَسْتَمِعُوْنَ بِهٖٓ اِذْ يَسْتَمِعُوْنَ اِلَيْكَ وَاِذْ هُمْ نَجْوٰٓى اِذْ يَقُوْلُ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ اِنْ تَتَّبِعُوْنَ اِلَّا رَجُلًا مَّسْحُوْرًا ﴿٤٧﴾[49]

The implication of the verse is that these people do not listen to the Qur'ān to understand it and benefit from it. The reason they listen to it is to raise objections and criticisms. They want to find some flaw in it in order to spread vicious propaganda against it.

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47. And when you recite out the Qur'ān, We place an unseen barrier between you and those people who do not believe in the Hereafter and put a cover on their hearts.

48. And make them hard of hearing so that they may not understand or hear it. And when you mention your Lord alone in the Qur'ān, they turn away in hatred.

49. And We know full well when they listen to you the reason they listen to you and when they whisper to one another when these unjust say: "You people are only following a person who is under a spell."

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اُنْظُرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوْا لَكَ الْاَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوْا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٤٨﴾[50]

The expression ضرب مثل hear means "to pass sarcastic remarks." For parallels, readers can look up verses 8-9 of Sūrah al-Furqān.

The implication of the verse is that they do not find any way to raise objections on the Prophet (sws) and the Qur'ān. For this reason, they have lost their way. They do not want to accept his call and at the same time do not find any point of rejection. As a result, everyone is uttering foolish things to vent his frustration. Some call him a soothsayer, some a madman and some a magician. The Prophet (sws) should be patient on what they say and leave them to themselves. The truth shall soon come before them.

وَقَالُوْٓا ءَاِذَا كُنَّا عِظَامًا وَّرُفَاتًا ءَاِنَّا لَمَبْعُوْثُوْنَ خَلْقًا جَدِيْدًا ﴿٤٩﴾[51]

This verse cites their view about the far-fetched nature of the hereafter.

قُلْ كُوْنُوْا حِجَارَةً اَوْ حَدِيْدًا ﴿٥٠﴾ اَوْ خَلْقًا مِّمَّا يَكْبُرُ فِيْ صُدُوْرِكُمْ ۚ فَسَيَقُوْلُوْنَ مَنْ يُّعِيْدُنَا ۭ قُلِ الَّذِيْ فَطَرَكُمْ اَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ ۚ فَسَيُنْغِضُوْنَ اِلَيْكَ رُءُوْسَهُمْ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ مَتٰى هُوَ ۭ قُلْ عَسٰٓى اَنْ يَّكُوْنَ قَرِيْبًا ﴿٥١﴾[52]

The question posed "Who will give us life again?" in the verse is not meant to be asked. In their minds, they already have answered it in the negative. However, the Qur'ān has given its answer thus: "He who created you the first time." It is very concise, yet very comprehensive. The implication is that when God easily created them from nothingness the first time, how could He face any difficulty in recreating them?

The word إنغاض means "to shake one's head." In other words, even after this answer is given to them by the Prophet (sws), they will not be satisfied. They will sarcastically ask about the time of this event. The response "it may well be that its time is near" to this remark portrays the fact that only God knows about this time. Not even a prophet is privy to it. Yet what is certain to happen is bound to happen. It may take time but it cannot be ignored merely because its time is not known. No one

50. See what sarcasm they heap on you. These people have lost their way. They are not finding any way.

51. And they say: "When we become bones and are reduced to bits, we will be raised to life again?"

52. Say: Whether you become stones or iron or any other substance which in your view is even harder than them. Then they will say: "Who will give us life again?" Say: He who created you the first time. Then they will shake their heads before you and ask: "When would this happen?" Say: It may well be that its time is near.

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knows about his time of death. But a person who denies death merely because its time of arrival is not known must be regarded as foolish.

يَوْمَ يَدْعُوْكُمْ فَتَسْتَجِيْبُوْنَ بِحَمْدِهٖ وَتَظُنُّوْنَ اِنْ لَّبِثْتُمْ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿٥٢﴾[53]

The Idolaters of the Quraysh are directly addressed here. On the Day of Judgement, all truths will be fully unveiled before them. They will think that they had just slept a while ago and now woken up. Such will be the nature of this period of time which they today think is too long. In other words, it is as if the Day of Judgement looms on the head of every person who dies. He will have no recollection of the time he had spent in Barzakh.

وَقُلْ لِّعِبَادِيْ يَقُوْلُوا الَّتِيْ هِيَ اَحْسَنُ ؕ اِنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ يَنْزَغُ بَيْنَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ كَانَ لِلْاِنْسَانِ عَدُوًّا مُّبِيْنًا ﴿٥٣﴾[54]

It is evident from earlier verses that these rivals of the Prophet (sws) were using all their weapons of sarcasm and scorn. Whenever they found an opportunity, they would disparage Muslims and also misbehave with the Prophet (sws). An example of such a behaviour is mentioned in verse 47. This situation entailed that Muslims be given guidance so that they are not induced to do something in response to this disparaging attitude which would damage their preaching, They are told not to reply to the foolish banter of their opponents. They should only try to communicate to them what is the truth and correct, and remember that Satan is their open enemy. He is always waiting for the slightest of opportunities to sow seeds of dissension between them. Precisely the same guidance is given to them in the same background in Sūrah al-Naḥl in the following words:

اُدْعُ اِلٰى سَبِيْلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَ الْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَ جَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ اَحْسَنُ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيْلِهٖ وَهُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِيْنَ. (:)

Call men to the path of your Lord with wisdom and kindly exhortation and debate with them in the most befitting manner. Indeed, your Lord best knows those who stray from His path and those who are rightly guided. (16:125)

Similarly, verses 198-201 of Sūrah al-A'rāf also discuss this topic. They can be looked up if more explanation is needed.

رَبُّكُمْ اَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ ؕ اِنْ يَّشَاْ يَرْحَمْكُمْ اَوْ اِنْ يَّشَاْ يُعَذِّبْكُمْ ؕ وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكِيْلًا ﴿٥٤﴾[55]

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53. The day He calls you, you will obey His directive while praising Him and you will think that you stayed for only a short while.

54. And tell My servants: Say only that which is better. Indeed, Satan keeps implanting evil suggestions among them. Indeed, Satan is an open enemy of human beings.

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This verse points to the bounds of preaching for the believers and the Prophet (sws) so that they are not hurt by the attitude of the disbelievers. Their only responsibility is to communicate the truth. God knows who is worthy of His mercy and deserves His mercy after being guided. He also is aware of those who are worthy of punishment because of going astray. It is not the responsibility of the Prophet (sws) and his companions to necessarily convert others into believers. In other words, the Prophet (sws) is not required to force them to become believers so that he thinks that he is responsible for their good or evil deeds. His responsibility is to only deliver the truth. Its acceptance or rejection is the job of his addressees. God will hold him accountable for this obligation only. So why should he be needlessly worried?

وَرَبُّكَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ وَلَقَدْ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَ النَّبِيّٖنَ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ وَّاٰتَيْنَا دَاوٗدَ زَبُوْرًا ﴿۵۵﴾[56]

In the heat of the discussion, the biased attitude of regarding one's leaders to be superior to others is the foremost source of creating disorder. People start to exaggerate and emphasize in eulogizing their heroes. They are not prepared to accept the superiority of others as they consider this to be their defeat. It seems that this mischief had erupted in those times or there was a strong chance of its eruption. This was particularly so because the Jews had launched themselves in opposing the Muslims with all their mean tactics, as has been indicated earlier. They were standing behind the Idolaters and fully supporting them. They were especially prone to stir this propaganda of superiority, as is mentioned in verse 253 of Sūrah al-Baqarah. In order to nip this propaganda, the Qur'ān has guided Muslims by saying that God is aware of whatever is in the heavens and the earth. He knows the status and rank of everyone. Others are not aware of this. As for the superiority of prophets, it is relative and not absolute. For example, God spoke with Moses (sws), gave Jesus (sws) clear signs and helped him through Gabriel, and bestowed the Psalms on David (sws). This is the correct view regarding prophets and Muslims must adhere to it. So, while acknowledging the aspects of Muḥammad's superiority, they should also accept the distinctive features of other prophets. Readers can look up what I have written while explaining verse 253 of Sūrah al-Baqarah. The distinctive feature of the Psalms given to David (sws) was that it is the only versified divine book and entirely composed of hymns and holy glorification.

قُلِ ادْعُوا الَّذِيْنَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِهٖ فَلَا يَمْلِكُوْنَ كَشْفَ الضُّرِّ عَنْكُمْ وَلَا تَحْوِيْلًا ﴿۵۶﴾[57]

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55. Your Lord knows you full well. If He wants, He will show mercy to you or if He desires, He will afflict you with a torment. And We have not sent you to be responsible for them.

56. And your Lord knows full well what is in the heavens and earth. And We have given superiority to some prophets over others and We gave the Psalms to David.

57. Say: Try to invoke those whom you regard as deities besides God. Neither will they be

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The previous three verses, as referred to earlier, were parenthetical in nature. They served the purpose of an on the spot admonition and guidance. Now the discourse once again connects back to verses 51-52. Earlier it was said that the time of punishment – which they were demanding – may well be near. Now they are asked to call their alleged partners of God if they think that they can help them. They will neither be able to ward off any calamity nor turn it away to some other place for a while.

أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُ ۚ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ كَانَ مَحْذُورًا ﴿٥٧﴾[58]

This is a reference to the angels.

Section VI (Verses 58-60)

Earlier in verse 11, it has been mentioned that when the Prophet (sws) warned the Idolaters of the torment, they would immediately demand to be shown this torment. Now that the torment has been mentioned in the previous verses, the established practice of God about it is explained. They are told why the Almighty does not show people the signs of His torment merely because people demand them.

Text and Translation

وَإِن مِّن قَرْيَةٍ إِلَّا نَحْنُ مُهْلِكُوهَا قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ أَوْ مُعَذِّبُوهَا عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا ۚ كَانَ ذَٰلِكَ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَسْطُورًا ﴿٥٨﴾
وَمَا مَنَعَنَا أَن نُّرْسِلَ بِالْآيَاتِ إِلَّا أَن كَذَّبَ بِهَا الْأَوَّلُونَ ۚ وَآتَيْنَا ثَمُودَ النَّاقَةَ مُبْصِرَةً فَظَلَمُوا بِهَا ۚ وَمَا نُرْسِلُ بِالْآيَاتِ إِلَّا تَخْوِيفًا ﴿٥٩﴾ وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لَكَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ أَحَاطَ بِالنَّاسِ ۚ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّؤْيَا الَّتِي أَرَيْنَاكَ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُونَةَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ ۚ وَنُخَوِّفُهُمْ ۖ فَمَا يَزِيدُهُمْ إِلَّا طُغْيَانًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٦٠﴾

There is not a single city that We shall not destroy before the Day of Judgement or not inflict it with a severe punishment. This is written in the book. And the only thing that has stopped Us from sending signs of punishment is that the earlier generations denied them. And We gave the Thamūd a she-camel as an eye-opening sign. But they were unjust to themselves and denied it. And We only send signs to frighten [people]. (59-60)

And remember when We said to you: Your Lord has surrounded the people. And

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able to ward off any calamity from you nor defer it.

58. Those whom they invoke themselves fervently try to find their Lord's nearness as to who among them could become the nearest. And they look forward to their Lord's mercy and fear His torment. Indeed, the torment of your Lord is a thing to be feared.

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that dream We showed you, We only made it a trial for the people and that tree as well which has been cursed in the Qur'ān. And We frighten them, but this thing is merely increasing them in their extreme rebelliousness. (60)

Explanation

وَاِنْ مِّنْ قَرْيَةٍ اِلَّا نَحْنُ مُهْلِكُوْهَا قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ اَوْ مُعَذِّبُوْهَا عَذَابًا شَدِيْدًا ؕ كَانَ ذٰلِكَ فِي الْكِتٰبِ مَسْطُوْرًا ﴿۵۸﴾[59]

The word قرية refers to the central and main cities where their leadership and nobles reside.

This verse answers the demand of the disbelievers of the Quraysh regarding the sign of the promised punishment. Here the style adopted is concise. However, in verse 16 of this *sūrah*, the established practice of God has been referred to which governs what is stated here: وَاِذَآ اَرَدْنَآ اَنْ نُّهْلِكَ قَرْيَةً اَمَرْنَا مُتْرَفِيْهَا فَفَسَقُوْا فِيْهَا فَحَقَّ عَلَيْهَا الْقَوْلُ فَدَمَّرْنٰهَا تَدْمِيْرًا.[60]

This established practice has always been in play and will continue to be so. However, for the disbelievers of the Quraysh, this issue had become even more grave. The reason was that God had sent a messenger among them. A messenger is the final means of conclusive communication of the truth. If a nation rejects its messenger, it is given some respite and then necessarily destroyed. This is written in the register of God. It is stated there that such and such a nation will be intentionally guilty of certain crimes that will lead to its destruction.

وَمَا مَنَعَنَآ اَنْ نُّرْسِلَ بِالْاٰيٰتِ اِلَّآ اَنْ كَذَّبَ بِهَا الْاَوَّلُوْنَ ؕ وَاٰتَيْنَا ثَمُوْدَ النَّاقَةَ مُبْصِرَةً فَظَلَمُوْا بِهَا ؕ وَمَا نُرْسِلُ بِالْاٰيٰتِ اِلَّا تَخْوِيْفًا ﴿۵۹﴾[61]

Here the Almighty has alluded to the wisdom and mercy because of which He is not sending a sign of punishment, in spite of the emphatic demand of the Quraysh. It is said that the purpose of such signs is to admonish and warn people so that they fear the punishment they are being informed of. However, previous nations because of their wretchedness instead of paying heed to such signs ended up rejecting them and thereby opened the door of divine punishment.

The preposition ب in فَظَلَمُوْا بِهَا evidences the fact that a word to the affect كذبوا is encompassed here. Thus the overall expression would be ظَلَمُوْا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَكَذَّبُوْا بِهَا (they were unjust to their souls and denied the sign of the she-camel).

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59. There is not a single city that We shall not destroy before the Day of Judgement or not inflict it with a severe punishment. This is written in the book..

60. And when We intend to destroy a settlement, We direct its affluent. So, they create great disorder in it. Thus, the word is fulfilled for them. Then at once We totally wipe it out.

61. And the only thing that has stopped Us from sending signs of punishment is that the earlier generations denied them. And We gave the Thamūd a she-camel as an eye-opening sign. But they were unjust to themselves and denied it. And We only send signs to frighten [people].

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This example shows how a previous nation denied a sign. If the stubbornness of the Thamūd had not blinded them, this sign was enough for them. Not only did they not benefit from this sign, they killed the she-camel and in this way opened the door to their own destruction.

If God sends a sign of punishment, it is meant to warn people of the actual punishment. However, the obdurate are not convinced by it. They interpret it in a way that suits them. Thus if they see a stone-hurling wind, they will regard it to be a stream of beneficial clouds that would drench them. If some natural calamity is encountered, they will attribute it to the tide of time. In short, any sign whose purpose is to warn them is unable to convince them. What can only convince them is the punishment itself. However, once it arrives, being convinced will become immaterial.

وَاِذْ قُلْنَا لَكَ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ اَحَاطَ بِالنَّاسِ ؕ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّءْيَا الَّتِيْٓ اَرَيْنٰكَ اِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُوْنَةَ فِى الْقُرْاٰنِ ؕ وَ نُخَوِّفُهُمْ ۙ فَمَا يَزِيْدُهُمْ اِلَّا طُغْيَانًا كَبِيْرًا ﴿٦٠﴾[62]

The previous verses mentioned the attitude of the nations regarding the signs of punishment. Now the attitude of the Prophet's nation in particular is referred to. The purpose is to show that if a sign of punishment is shown at their demand, their attitude too would be no different. They also will deny it because they have made until now they have made fun of the warnings they have been given. Thus for example, when the Almighty told the Prophet (sws) that God has surrounded them, they mocked and derided him instead of taking heed from it.

This is a reference to the verses in which the Almighty has stated that He is advancing towards Makkah by diminishing the power and influence of the disbelievers who inhabit it. Thus for example, it is stated in Sūrah al-Ra'd:

اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّا نَاْتِى الْاَرْضَ نَنْقُصُهَا مِنْ اَطْرَافِهَا (١٣: ٤١)

Do they not see that We are closing in upon this territory by reducing it from its borders? (13: 41)

The above words were revealed when Islam had started to spread in Makkah. It was as if the people of Makkah were gradually being surrounded by Islam. This topic is also discussed in verse 21 of Sūrah al-Fatḥ. Then when Islamic forces started to gain victories, the Qur'ān predicted the conquest of Makkah in the following words:

62. And remember when We said to you: Your Lord has surrounded the people. And that dream We showed you, We only made it a trial for the people and that tree as well which has been cursed in the Qur'ān. And We frighten them, but this thing is merely increasing them in their extreme rebelliousness.

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وَّاُخْرٰی لَمْ تَقْدِرُوْا عَلَيْهَا قَدْ اَحَاطَ اللّٰهُ بِهَا (٤٨ : ٢١)

And another victory also on which you do not have power as yet. However, God has it in His grasp. (48:21)

All these future events were not just whims. Circumstances were clearly pointing towards them. However, the stubborn leaders of the Quraysh continued to deny them until the very end. Ultimately, they had to surrender before the Muslims.

The words "and that dream We showed you, We only made it a trial for the people" state the second example of their stubbornness. They made fun of this example too.

The word الرُّءْيَا (dream) refers to the ascension mentioned at the beginning of this *sūrah*. It has been explained there that this incident was a means of warning both the Quraysh and the Israelites: the custodianship of both these houses of God would be taken away from its corrupt and fraudulent custodians and consigned to Prophet Muḥammad (sws) and his followers. However, none of these two groups paid heed to this warning too. They made so much fun of it that the very thing which was meant to warn them and inform them of the future became a trial for them because of their wretched attitude.[63]

The words "and that tree as well which has been cursed in the Qur'ān" state the third example of warning which they did not pay heed to. They refer to the *zaqqūm* tree about which the Qur'ān (44:43) has stated that it will be in Hell. Emaciated with hunger, the dwellers of Hell will leap to eat it. Then because of extreme thirst, they will drink boiling water like thirsty camels. The attribute of "cursed" for the tree is the opposite of "blessed." On the one hand is the blessed tree which is beneficial to God's creatures because of its shade, fruit and freshness. Its direct opposite is the cursed tree which has neither shade nor fruit. It is just an amalgam of thorns and is filled with poison and sourness – a curse and calamity for the God's creatures. These are the attributes of the *zaqqūm* tree.

It is obvious that these traits of Hell have been narrated here so that the negligent and the indifferent pay heed and do what they can to save themselves from it. However, the wretched Quraysh instead of benefitting from these warnings started to make fun of them by analogously regarding the circumstances of next world with that of the existing one. They would mock at these statements by typically saying that this person is trying to gather fire, water and a tree at one place! How can a tree survive in fire? How can water and fire co-exist?

The words "and We frighten them, but this thing is merely increasing them in their

63. Earlier in this exegesis, I have explained the nature of the dreams shown to prophets of God. They are a means of divine revelation. Prophet Muḥammad (sws) was shown numerous incidents in dreams only. At times, the observations witnessed in dreams are more trustworthy than what is seen from the naked eye.

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extreme rebelliousness" imply that people whose minds have become so distorted that what is straight appears twisted to them should not be expected to believe if they are shown a sign of punishment at their demand. They will find some excuse or the other if they see it. They are not ones who will learn from a sign of punishment. They will only be convinced if they see the actual punishment – after which belief or disbelief becomes immaterial.

Section VII (Verses 61-65)

The succeeding verses expose the real reason of arrogance of these people. This real reason is not what they express by saying that they want to see a sign of punishment to believe in the Prophet (sws). The fact is that after being blessed with God's favours, they have become arrogant instead of being grateful to Him. In adopting this attitude, they have precisely followed Satan and the latter has in exact terms proved his point about the progeny of Adam (sws).

Readers may proceed to study these verses.

Text and Translation

وَاِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اسْجُدُوْا لِاٰدَمَ فَسَجَدُوْٓا اِلَّآ اِبْلِيْسَ ؕ قَالَ ءَاَسْجُدُ لِمَنْ خَلَقْتَ طِيْنًا ﴿٦١﴾ قَالَ اَرَءَيْتَكَ
هٰذَا الَّذِيْ كَرَّمْتَ عَلَيَّ ۫ لَئِنْ اَخَّرْتَنِ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ لَاَحْتَنِكَنَّ ذُرِّيَّتَهٗٓ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالَ اذْهَبْ فَمَنْ تَبِعَكَ
مِنْهُمْ فَاِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ جَزَآؤُكُمْ جَزَآءً مَّوْفُوْرًا ﴿٦٣﴾ وَاسْتَفْزِزْ مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتَ مِنْهُمْ بِصَوْتِكَ وَاَجْلِبْ عَلَيْهِمْ بِخَيْلِكَ
وَرَجِلِكَ وَشَارِكْهُمْ فِي الْاَمْوَالِ وَالْاَوْلَادِ وَعِدْهُمْ ؕ وَمَا يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ اِلَّا غُرُوْرًا ﴿٦٤﴾ اِنَّ عِبَادِيْ لَيْسَ لَكَ
عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنٌ ؕ وَكَفٰى بِرَبِّكَ وَكِيْلًا ﴿٦٥﴾

And remember when We had said to the angels: "Prostrate before Adam." So, they prostrated except Iblīs. He said: "Should I prostrate before him who you have created from clay?" He said: "Just see! Is this the one who you honoured above me? If you give me respite until the Day of Judgement, I shall consume all his progeny except a few." God said: "Very Well! Those among them who follow you, then Hell is the full recompense for all of you. And whoever among them you can overpower, scare them with your commotion; bring upon them your riders and pedestrians, become a partner in their wealth and children and make promises with them. And the promises Satan makes with them are nothing but deception. Indeed, you will not have any power over My own servants and as a guardian, sufficient is your Lord." (61-65)

Explanation

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وَاِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اسْجُدُوْا لِاٰدَمَ فَسَجَدُوْٓا اِلَّآ اِبْلِيْسَ ؕ قَالَ ءَاَسْجُدُ لِمَنْ خَلَقْتَ طِيْنًا ﴿٦١﴾[64]

The creation of Adam (sws) and his dialogue with Satan has been discussed in detail in Sūrah al-Baqarah and Sūrah al-A'rāf. For this reason, I will confine myself to explaining the meaning of this verse with regard to its context only.

The verse sounds an assurance to the Prophet (sws). The real reason of the denial of these people is not that they have not been shown any sign of punishment; their arrogance is the real reason for this denial. In this matter too, they have exactly followed Satan, their leader. Just as his arrogance did not let him prostrate before Adam (sws) thinking that he was made of a superior substance, these people too have become blind because of their power and authority and their arrogance is not letting them accept Muḥammad's superiority and believe in him.

قَالَ اَرَءَيْتَكَ هٰذَا الَّذِيْ كَرَّمْتَ عَلَيَّ ۫ لَئِنْ اَخَّرْتَنِ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ لَاَحْتَنِكَنَّ ذُرِّيَّتَهٗٓ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿٦٢﴾[65]

The word اَرَءَيْتَكَ also connotes sarcasm and humiliation. The meaning of he expression احتنك الجراد الارض would mean that "the locusts consumed the lush crops."

The verse shows that this enmity of Adam (sws) and his progeny with Satan will continue until the Day of Judgement. Its purpose is to show that people who are not professing faith have been hijacked by Satan and his progeny and he has in fact proven the claim that he made at the beginning when Adam (sws) was created.

قَالَ اذْهَبْ فَمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ فَاِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ جَزَآؤُكُمْ جَزَآءً مَّوْفُوْرًا ﴿٦٣﴾[66]

The verse shows that the respite demanded by Satan from God until the Day of Judgement was given to him. However, this opportunity given to him will still not secure him from punishment because Hell is such an abode that it will punish him commensurate to what he will in this whole period of respite.

وَاسْتَفْزِزْ مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتَ مِنْهُمْ بِصَوْتِكَ وَاَجْلِبْ عَلَيْهِمْ بِخَيْلِكَ وَرَجِلِكَ وَشَارِكْهُمْ فِي الْاَمْوَالِ وَالْاَوْلَادِ وَعِدْهُمْ ؕ وَمَا

64. And remember when We had said to the angels: "Prostrate before Adam." So, they prostrated except Iblīs. He said: "Should I prostrate before him who you have created from clay?"

Indeed, you will not have any power over My own servants and as a guardian, sufficient is your Lord."

65. He said: "Just see! Is this the one who you honoured above me? If you give me respite until the Day of Judgement, I shall consume all his progeny except a few."

66. God said: "Very Well! Those among them who follow you, then Hell is the full recompense for all of you.

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يَعِدُهُمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ اِلَّا غُرُوْرًا ﴿٦٤﴾[67]

The word إستفزاز means "to make someone anxious and worried" and صوت here connotes "uproar, commotion and propaganda."

The verse refers to the extent of opportunity given to Satan and his progeny to lead people astray. It serves as a caution to them so that they should not take it easy and all those who want to protect their faith from his lures should remain forever vigilant.

Satan is told to do whatever he possibly can to divert people from the straight path. He can make use of all sorts of commotion and propaganda in this regard. He can employ the print, public and social media with all their influence to his advantage.

It may be kept in mind that bringing over pedestrians and riders mentioned in the verse is not a metaphor. It is a literal fact. All those wars incited by the enemies of Islam to persecute the believers are included in this.

Satan has also been given the opportunity to become a partner in the wealth and children of people. His worshippers will regard him so. They will take out a share for him from their wealth and keep their children's names after him and even sacrifice them for his pleasure.

He also has the chance to lure people through his enchanting promises. By falling for them, these people will become negligent of their real responsibilities of life. But they should remember that all promises of Satan are fake. These include the notion of the idolaters of Arabia that the angels they worship bring them closer to God or the notion of the Jews that they are the children and favoured ones of God and thus fire shall not even touch them.

اِنَّ عِبَادِیْ لَیْسَ لَكَ عَلَیْهِمْ سُلْطٰنٌ ؕ وَكَفٰى بِرَبِّكَ وَكِیْلًا ﴿٦٥﴾[68]

This is an assurance sounded to those who strongly adhere to faith: whatever Satan can do, his power is not absolute; he cannot forcibly lead people astray. Absolute authority is with God only. So the servants of God who inspite of the mischief worked by Satan want to adhere to their faith and with full confidence entrust themselves to God will find God to be their guardian. They will need none else than Him for this purpose. He will protect His servants in the gravest of circumstances and secure their faith.

Section VIII (Verses 66-72)

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67. And whoever among them you can overpower, scare them with your commotion; bring upon them your riders and pedestrians, become a partner in their wealth and children and make promises with them. And the promises Satan makes with them are nothing but deception.

68. Indeed, you will not have any power over My own servants and as a guardian, sufficient is your Lord."

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The succeeding verses depict the attitude of people when they are caught in some calamity. On such instances, they call upon God and plead before him. As soon as they are secure from it, they once again show arrogance. They completely forget that if God wants He can once again strike them with another calamity and that too in such a way that it becomes permanent for them. After that the parable of two groups is mentioned: one which sees the world with open eyes and learns lessons from it; the second which always remains blind. The fate of both these groups is referred to. This parable is actually of the disbelievers of the Quraysh, who were the first addressees of the Qur'ān. However, the attitude of other arrogant people is no different.

Readers may now proceed to study these verses.

Text and Translation

رَبُّكُمُ الَّذِیْ یُزْجِیْ لَكُمُ الْفُلْكَ فِی الْبَحْرِ لِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِیْمًا ﴿۶۶﴾ وَاِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فِی الْبَحْرِ
ضَلَّ مَنْ تَدْعُوْنَ اِلَّاۤ اِیَّاهُ ۚ فَلَمَّا نَجّٰىكُمْ اِلَى الْبَرِّ اَعْرَضْتُمْ ؕ وَكَانَ الْاِنْسَانُ كَفُوْرًا ﴿۶۷﴾ اَفَاَمِنْتُمْ اَنْ یَّخْسِفَ بِكُمْ
جَانِبَ الْبَرِّ اَوْ یُرْسِلَ عَلَیْكُمْ حَاصِبًا ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُوْا لَكُمْ وَكِیْلًا ﴿۶۸﴾ اَمْ اَمِنْتُمْ اَنْ یُّعِیْدَكُمْ فِیْهِ تَارَةً اُخْرٰی
فَیُرْسِلَ عَلَیْكُمْ قَاصِفًا مِّنَ الرِّیْحِ فَیُغْرِقَكُمْ بِمَا كَفَرْتُمْ ۙ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُوْا لَكُمْ عَلَیْنَا بِهٖ تَبِیْعًا ﴿۶۹﴾ وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا
بَنِیْۤ اٰدَمَ وَحَمَلْنٰهُمْ فِی الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنٰهُمْ مِّنَ الطَّیِّبٰتِ وَفَضَّلْنٰهُمْ عَلٰی كَثِیْرٍ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِیْلًا ﴿۷۰﴾ یَوْمَ
نَدْعُوْا كُلَّ اُنَاسٍۭ بِاِمَامِهِمْ ۚ فَمَنْ اُوْتِیَ كِتٰبَهٗ بِیَمِیْنِهٖ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ یَقْرَءُوْنَ كِتٰبَهُمْ وَلَا یُظْلَمُوْنَ فَتِیْلًا ﴿۷۱﴾ وَمَنْ
كَانَ فِیْ هٰذِهٖۤ اَعْمٰی فَهُوَ فِی الْاٰخِرَةِ اَعْمٰی وَاَضَلُّ سَبِیْلًا ﴿۷۲﴾

Your Lord is one who makes the ship sail for you in the sea so that you can seek His bounty. Indeed, He is very Merciful to you. And when you are struck by a calamity in the sea, all those you invoke besides Him disappear. Then when He safely brings you to the shore, you turn away. And human beings are very ungrateful. (66-67)

Have you no fear that He take you towards the shore sinking you with the earth or send upon you a chilling wind; then you find no one as your protector? Or have you no fear that He take you to the sea again, then send on you a stormy wind; thus He drown you for your ingratitude and you not find any supporter for yourselves who is able to come after Us for it? (68-69)

And We have bestowed honour on the children of Adam and provided them with transport both in the land and the sea and granted them sustenance of pure things and gave them prominent superiority over many creatures of Ours. Bear in mind the day when We shall call every groups with its leaders. Then those who are given their account in their right hands, they will read it and not the slightest injustice shall be done to them. And he who remains blind in this world, he shall remain blind in the

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Hereafter as well and farthest in error. (70-72)

Explanation

رَبُّكُمُ الَّذِیْ یُزْجِیْ لَكُمُ الْفُلْكَ فِی الْبَحْرِ لِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِیْمًا ﴿۶۶﴾ وَاِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فِی الْبَحْرِ ضَلَّ مَنْ تَدْعُوْنَ اِلَّاۤ اِیَّاهُ ۚ فَلَمَّا نَجّٰىكُمْ اِلَى الْبَرِّ اَعْرَضْتُمْ ؕ وَكَانَ الْاِنْسَانُ كَفُوْرًا ﴿۶۷﴾[69]

This is a parable which depicts that whatever favour people get is actually from God. They can benefit from it and they owe this obligation to it that they are thankful to God for it. However, such is their wretchedness that when they receive a favour, they become arrogant before God and regard it be a result of their own effort and of the favour shown to them by their alleged deities. However, when people are struck by a calamity, they fervently beseech God, forgetting all their deities. Then as soon as God delivers them, they once again resort to their evil ways and forget Him.

In order to illustrate this attitude, the example of travelling on a ship is given. It is God's power and might which makes it sail across the sea with thousands of tons of load. God has made this possible so that people benefit from their sea travel and be grateful to this favour. But such are they that when the ship smoothly sails across the sea, God never comes in their minds. However, as soon as it is caught in a whirlpool and shakes violently, they forget their arrogance and also their deities and only plead to God. Yet this situation remains as long as the ship is caught up in a whirlpool. As soon as it comes out of it and they step on the shore, they neither remember their troubled times nor their pleading to God.

This parable also sounds an assurance to the Prophet (sws): he should not think that the Quraysh will accept the path of faith and guidance once he shows them the sign of punishment they are asking. If they encounter a calamity, they will implore before God and as soon as they are secure from it, they will revert to their previous misdeeds. This path of guidance can be known if a person pays heed to his nature and to his intellect. If these people are not prepared for this, how can a sign of punishment guide them?

اَفَاَمِنْتُمْ اَنْ یَّخْسِفَ بِكُمْ جَانِبَ الْبَرِّ اَوْ یُرْسِلَ عَلَیْكُمْ حَاصِبًا ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُوْا لَكُمْ وَكِیْلًا ﴿۶۸﴾[70]

These people are posed the question mentioned in this verse to caution and prod them: do they think that God's kingdom is confined to the sea and not the land? If He

69. Your Lord is one who makes the ship sail for you in the sea so that you can seek His bounty. Indeed, He is very Merciful to you. And when you are struck by a calamity in the sea, all those you invoke besides Him disappear. Then when He safely brings you to the shore, you turn away. And human beings are very ungrateful.

70. Have you no fear that He take you towards the shore sinking you with the earth or send upon you a chilling wind; then you find no one as your protector?

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thrusts them in the land or sends on them a stone-hurling wind which totally ravages them and their houses, who can save them from Him?

اَمۡ اَمِنۡتُمۡ اَنۡ يُّعِيۡدَكُمۡ فِيۡهِ تَارَةً اُخۡرٰى فَيُرۡسِلَ عَلَيۡكُمۡ قَاصِفًا مِّنَ الرِّيۡحِ فَيُغۡرِقَكُمۡ بِمَا كَفَرۡتُمۡ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُوۡا لَكُمۡ عَلَيۡنَا بِهٖ تَبِيۡعًا ﴿۶۹﴾[71]

The word قاصف means "something which smashes and breaks something" and تبيع means "helper" and supporter."

They think that once they have been let go by God, they have no obligation towards Him. It is very much possible that He punishes them once again for their ingratitude. In verse 75, the words used are: "then you will not find anyone to help you against Us."

وَلَقَدۡ كَرَّمۡنَا بَنِىۡۤ اٰدَمَ وَحَمَلۡنٰهُمۡ فِى الۡبَرِّ وَالۡبَحۡرِ وَرَزَقۡنٰهُمۡ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبٰتِ وَفَضَّلۡنٰهُمۡ عَلٰى كَثِيۡرٍ مِّمَّنۡ خَلَقۡنَا تَفۡضِيۡلًا ﴿۷۰﴾[72]

Mankind is now reminded of the honour mentioned in this verse entails that they must remember these favours of God and instead of showing arrogance, be grateful to Him. Showing arrogance on favours is the way of Satan and his fate is known.

Also evident from this verse is that the superiority human beings have over other species is not absolute. There are other creatures of God who are more superior than him.

يَوۡمَ نَدۡعُوۡا كُلَّ اُنَاسٍۢ بِاِمَامِهِمۡ‌ۚ فَمَنۡ اُوۡتِىَ كِتٰبَهٗ بِيَمِيۡنِهٖ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ يَقۡرَءُوۡنَ كِتٰبَهُمۡ وَلَا يُظۡلَمُوۡنَ فَتِيۡلًا ﴿۷۱﴾[73]

The word أناس means "a group of people" and إمام refers to "leaders and chiefs."

This verse reminds them of the Day of Judgement when God's court of justice would be set up. Every group will be called by God along with its leaders: the pious with their pious leaders and the impious with their impious leaders. The accounts of the pious will be handed over to them in their right hands and the impious in their left ones.

Those who would be handed over their accounts in their right hands will read them and see that not the slightest injustice has been done to them. Every single virtuous deed whether small or big will be written in it and will be fully recompensed. The

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71. Or have you no fear that He take you to the sea again, then send on you a stormy wind; thus He drown you for your ingratitude and you not find any supporter for yourselves who is able to come after Us for it?

72. And We have bestowed honour on the children of Adam and provided them with transport both in the land and the sea and granted them sustenance of pure things and gave them prominent superiority over many creatures of Ours.

73. Bear in mind the day when We shall call every groups with its leaders. Then those who are given their account in their right hands, they will read it and not the slightest injustice shall be done to them.

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verb "to read" here is used in its actual sense: they will happily read every thing and be thankful to God for His graciousness. Though the impressions of the ones who will be handed over their accounts in their left hands are not mentioned in words, it is evident from the context that instead of reading their accounts they will express frustration and sorrow. They will know that their evil deeds have made their register of accounts a thing of regret and embarrassment.

Gathering each group with its leaders and followers has the aspect of honouring them as well as conclusive communication of the truth. The leaders of the virtuous will see that the cause of making God's words superior for which they endangered their lives has thankfully produced superb consequences. On the other hand, the leaders of evil people will see the fate of their misdeeds and those who followed them will curse them and will demand a double torment for them, as is stated at another instance.

وَمَنْ كَانَ فِيْ هٰذِهٖٓ اَعْمٰى فَهُوَ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ اَعْمٰى وَاَضَلُّ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٧٢﴾[74]

After the companions of the right hand, this verse mentions the fate of the companions of the left hand. Since these people remained blind in this world, they will be raised up blind in the next one as well. If they were far away from their real destination in this world, this distance will be much more in the next. This is because once they are raised up in that world no chance will remain for them to return to the straight path.

Section IX (Verses 73-84)

In the succeeding verses, it is emphasized on the Prophet (sws) to adhere to his stance in spite of opposition from his rivals. However much they insist that they will become his companions if he makes some amendment in the Qur'ān as per their wish, he does not have the slightest authority to make such an amendment. The most that they can achieve by harassing him is to make matters so difficult for him that he is compelled to leave his city. If this happens, then after his departure, they too would not be able to live in this city. They will meet the same fate as the one which nations of messengers meet when they migrate. After that the Prophet (sws) has been directed to seek help from the prayer especially the *tahajjud* prayer to acquire perseverance. He has then been taught the supplication that he must make just before migration. The victory associated with migration is then indicated. At the end, sorrow is expressed at the wretchedness of the Prophet's rivals: the Qur'ān which is a cure and mercy of them has become a scourge for them because of their own misdeeds.

74. And he who remains blind in this world, he shall remain blind in the Hereafter as well and farthest in error.

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Readers may now proceed to study the verses.

Text and Translation

وَاِنْ كَادُوْا لَيَفْتِنُوْنَكَ عَنِ الَّذِيْٓ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ لِتَفْتَرِيَ عَلَيْنَا غَيْرَهٗ ۖ وَاِذًا لَّاتَّخَذُوْكَ خَلِيْلًا ﴿٧٣﴾ وَلَوْلَآ اَنْ
ثَبَّتْنٰكَ لَقَدْ كِدْتَّ تَرْكَنُ اِلَيْهِمْ شَيْـًٔا قَلِيْلًا ﴿٧٤﴾ اِذًا لَّاَذَقْنٰكَ ضِعْفَ الْحَيٰوةِ وَضِعْفَ الْمَمَاتِ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ
عَلَيْنَا نَصِيْرًا ﴿٧٥﴾ وَاِنْ كَادُوْا لَيَسْتَفِزُّوْنَكَ مِنَ الْاَرْضِ لِيُخْرِجُوْكَ مِنْهَا وَاِذًا لَّا يَلْبَثُوْنَ خِلٰفَكَ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿٧٦﴾
سُنَّةَ مَنْ قَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنْ رُّسُلِنَا وَلَا تَجِدُ لِسُنَّتِنَا تَحْوِيْلًا ﴿٧٧﴾ اَقِمِ الصَّلٰوةَ لِدُلُوْكِ الشَّمْسِ اِلٰى غَسَقِ
الَّيْلِ وَقُرْاٰنَ الْفَجْرِ ۭ اِنَّ قُرْاٰنَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُوْدًا ﴿٧٨﴾ وَمِنَ الَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهٖ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ ۖ عَسٰٓى اَنْ يَّبْعَثَكَ
رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَّحْمُوْدًا ﴿٧٩﴾ وَقُلْ رَّبِّ اَدْخِلْنِيْ مُدْخَلَ صِدْقٍ وَّاَخْرِجْنِيْ مُخْرَجَ صِدْقٍ وَّاجْعَلْ لِّيْ مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ
سُلْطٰنًا نَّصِيْرًا ﴿٨٠﴾ وَقُلْ جَاۗءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ ۭ اِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوْقًا ﴿٨١﴾ وَنُنَزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْاٰنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاۗءٌ
وَّرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۙ وَلَا يَزِيْدُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ اِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿٨٢﴾ وَاِذَآ اَنْعَمْنَا عَلَي الْاِنْسَانِ اَعْرَضَ وَنَاٰ بِجَانِبِهٖ ۚ وَاِذَا
مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ كَانَ يَـُٔوْسًا ﴿٨٣﴾ قُلْ كُلٌّ يَّعْمَلُ عَلٰي شَاكِلَتِهٖ ۭ فَرَبُّكُمْ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ هُوَ اَهْدٰى سَبِيْلًا ﴿٨٤﴾

And it may well been that by subjecting you to trials they turned you away from what We have revealed to you so that you present something other than this Qur'ān by fabricating it on Us. And then they would have made you their close friend. And had We not braced you it may well be that you become a little inclined to them. If this had happened, We would have doubly punished you of life and death. Then you would not have found anyone against Us as your helper. (73-75)

And indeed they are after uprooting you from this land in order to turn you out from here. And if this happens, then they too will not be able to stay here for long after you. Keep in mind Our established practice about the messengers We sent before you and you will not find any change in this practice of Ours. Be diligent in the prayer from the descent of the sun to the darkness of the night and especially in the recital of *fajr*. Indeed, the recital of *fajr* is in attentive presence. And offer the *tahajjud* prayer at night also. This is additional for you. You may hope that your Lord will raise you such that you will be showered with praise and pray: Lord! Let my entry be with honour and let my departure be with honour and bless me with a helping authority especially from Your self. And declare: The truth has arrived and evil has perished and evil was bound to perish. (76-81)

And what We reveal in this Qur'ān is a cure and mercy for the believers and this thing is only increasing the unjust in their loss. And when We bless a human being with Our favour, he shows evasion and turns away. And when some calamity strikes

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him, he loses hope. Say: Each will follow his own way. So your Lord knows full well those who are more on the right path. (82-84)

Explanation

وَاِنْ كَادُوْا لَيَفْتِنُوْنَكَ عَنِ الَّذِيْٓ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ لِتَفْتَرِيَ عَلَيْنَا غَيْرَهٗ ۖ وَاِذًا لَّاتَّخَذُوْكَ خَلِيْلًا ﴿٧٣﴾ وَلَوْلَآ اَنْ ثَبَّتْنٰكَ لَقَدْ كِدْتَّ تَرْكَنُ اِلَيْهِمْ شَيْـًٔا قَلِيْلًا ﴿٧٤﴾ اِذًا لَّاَذَقْنٰكَ ضِعْفَ الْحَيٰوةِ وَضِعْفَ الْمَمَاتِ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ عَلَيْنَا نَصِيْرًا ﴿٧٥﴾[75]

In the expression وَاِنْ كَادُوْا لَيَفْتِنُوْنَكَ عَنِ الَّذِيْٓ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ, the preposition عَنْ shows that the word لَيَفْتِنُوْنَكَ encompasses the meaning of يصرفونك or a word of similar meaning. The implication is that the opponents of the Prophet (sws) have launched such a massive onslaught against him that by inflicting him with various trials they may well have made him give up his stance. However, the Almighty saved him from this situation.

A phase comes in the preaching of messengers when their opponents think that their preaching is deeply rooted in the land and mere blind opposition will not counter it. On such occasions, they undertake the political intrigue mentioned in the verse or present a compromising formula. This phase also ensued in the preaching mission of Prophet Muḥammad (sws). When his opponents saw that his words were deeply influencing the masses, some of their groups suggested to him that if he makes such and such amendments in the directives of the Qur'ān, they will accept his invitation and become his bosom friends.[76] Narratives mention the name of the Thaqīf tribe in this regard. This was a very tough phase for the Prophet (sws). On the one hand were divine directives revealed to him regarding which he did not have the authority to alter the slightest. On the other hand, he was very desirous of his nation to accept faith and did not want to waste a chance that could lead to their acceptance of faith. This situation made him hesitant. The words "it may well be that you become a little inclined to them" point to his reluctance. It was in this precarious situation that God helped his messenger and dispelled his reluctance.

It should be kept in mind that infallibility of prophets does not mean that they can never be in a state of indecision or a wrong inclination cannot pass through their hearts. It only means that in the first place none of their inclinations is based on evil desires and is always virtuous in nature. Secondly, even in the path of virtue if they take a step which is not correct, the Almighty protects them and guides them in the

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75. And it may well been that by subjecting you to trials they turned you away from what We have revealed to you so that you present something other than this Qur'ān by fabricating it on Us. And then they would have made you their close friend. And had We not braced you it may well be that you become a little inclined to them. If this had happened, We would have doubly punished you of life and death. Then you would not have found anyone against Us as your helper.

76. A similar thing has been mentioned in verse 49 of Sūrah al-Mā'idah as well. Readers may look it up.

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right direction.

The words "If this had happened, We would have doubly punished you of life and death; then you would not have found anyone against Us as your helper" apparently address the Prophet (sws). However, the rebuke in them is addressed to those who were bringing the suggestion of this compromise so that they get to know that if this entails double punishment for the Prophet (sws) in this world and the next, then how can it even materialize?

A governing noun is suppressed in ضِعْفَ الْحَيٰوةِ وَ ضِعْفَ الْمَمَاتِ. Thus the actual sense is: ضِعْفَ عَذَابِ الْحَيٰوةِ وَ ضِعْفَ عَذَابِ الْمَمَاتِ. This warning of a two fold punishment is according to the rank and status of a messenger. The higher the status of a person, the higher his responsibility and accountability.

وَاِنْ كَادُوْا لَيَسْتَفِزُّوْنَكَ مِنَ الْاَرْضِ لِيُخْرِجُوْكَ مِنْهَا وَاِذًا لَّا يَلْبَثُوْنَ خِلٰفَكَ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿۷۶﴾ سُنَّةَ مَنْ قَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنْ رُّسُلِنَا وَلَا تَجِدُ لِسُنَّتِنَا تَحْوِيْلًا ﴿۷۷﴾[77]

The word إستفزاز means "to make some anxious and apprehensive" and the word الاَرْض refers to Makkah.

When the Prophet's opponents lost hope of any compromise, their opposition, which was no less earlier as well, increased two fold. They employed their full force to compel him to leave Makkah. The verse comments on this attitude of theirs.

It has been explained at another instance that a messenger is a means of conclusive communication of the truth. As long as he remains among his people, he continues to seek forgiveness for them. Hence his presence among them secures them from God's torment. However, when the behaviour of his nation forces him to migrate from them, it becomes a soulless entity. The process of conclusive communication of the truth stands complete. After this, either God's torments appears and cleanses the land of this filth or the swords of the believers are unleashed on these people and decimate them. For the miscreants of Makkah, this second situation arose.

The word سُنَّةَ is in the accusative like يَوْمَ generally is. Thus the sense would be: أُذْكُرْ سُنَّةَ مَنْ. The implication would be that the Prophet (sws) and his companions should remember the established practice of God regarding the messengers He sent earlier. Such suppression emphasizes a certain thing and keeps it under direct focus.

اَقِمِ الصَّلٰوةَ لِدُلُوْكِ الشَّمْسِ اِلٰى غَسَقِ الَّيْلِ وَقُرْاٰنَ الْفَجْرِ ؕ اِنَّ قُرْاٰنَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُوْدًا ﴿۷۸﴾[78]

The expression اَقِمِ الصَّلٰوةَ does not merely mean to offer the prayer. It means to show

77. Keep in mind Our established practice about the messengers We sent before you and you will not find any change in this practice of Ours.

78. Be diligent in the prayer from the descent of the sun to the darkness of the night and especially in the recital of *fajr*. Indeed, the recital of *fajr* is in attentive presence.

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diligence and vigilance in the prayer.

The word دُلُوْك refers to descent of the sun. There are three stages of this: one, when it descends from midday, second when it descends from the line of sight and third when it disappears from the horizon. These three times are the times for the *ẓuhr*, *'aṣr* and *maghrib* prayers. The particle ل on دُلُوْك connotes time. This is a conventional usage of this particle in Arabic. On such occasions, it means "at." Thus for example الصَّلٰوةَ لِاَوْقَاتِهَا would mean "the prayer at its time" and اَقِمِ الصَّلٰوةَ لِدُلُوْكِ الشَّمْسِ would mean "be vigilant in the prayer at the time of the sun's descent."

The expression غَسَقِ الَّيْلِ means darkness of the first part of night when it becomes pronounced. This is the time of the *'ishā'* prayer. Though the expression can be governed by the verb اَقِمِ, in my opinion it is in the accusative because of specification (*ikhtiṣās*). The sense would be أَخُصُّ بِالذِّكْرِ قُرْآنَ الفَجْرِ signifying the importance of the *fajr* prayer.

The قُرْآنَ in قُرْآنَ الفَجْرِ refers to the recital of the Qur'ān in the *fajr* prayer. This word is also referring to a prolonged and audible recital of it in general terms. The word مَشْهُوْدًا refers to attentiveness and focus in listening to this recital which both a prayer leader and his followers experience especially in the *fajr* prayer and it also refers to the presence of the angels during it. Aḥādīth mention their blessed presence on this occasion.

It is evident from this that the times of the five prayers is mentioned in the Qur'ān itself. In fact, it is evident from the next verse that the *tahajjud* prayer and its time is also mentioned in the Qur'ān. If even after such explicit mention, someone says that the Qur'ān does not mention the times of the five prayers, what can be said except a prayer for his guidance.

It is evident from the times of the prayers that they are fixed keeping in view the kneeling and prostration of the great signs of this universe. It is evident from the verse under discussion that the sun remains in the state of standing, kneeling and prostration in all the times of night and day. Obviously, same would be the state of things which receive the sun's reflection. They too continue to stand, kneel and prostrate before their Lord. Thus for example the following verses refer to this aspect:

وَلِلّٰهِ يَسْجُدُ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ طَوْعًا وَّكَرْهًا وَّظِلٰلُهُمْ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْاٰصَالِ (١٣:١٥)

Whatever is in the heavens and the earth all are prostrating before Him willingly or unwillingly and also their shadows morning and evening. (13:15)

تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمٰوٰتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْاَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيْهِنَّ ؕ وَاِنْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ اِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهٖ وَلٰكِنْ لَّا تَفْقَهُوْنَ تَسْبِيْحَهُمْ.

(١٧:٤٤)

The seven heavens, the earth and whatever they contain all glorify Him only, and

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there is nothing which does not praise Him while glorifying Him, yet you do not understand their glorification. (17:44)

All these creations of God invite human beings through their form and state that just as they kneel and prostrate before God, people too should do so and create harmony with these creations and pray to God. However, it is the misfortune of a human being that he prostrates before the most trivial of things but shows arrogance before his real Lord. The fact is that these trivial things themselves prostrate before God and are subservient to Him. One can consider the example of the sun. Its kneeling and prostration are mentioned here. Who can imagine the extent of how much it was worshipped and is being worshipped?

Here, as indicated earlier, the Prophet (sws) is directed to adhere to the prayer to acquire patience and perseverance in the difficult phase he and his companions were passing through. Without the support of God, facing such hardships for the cause of truth with perseverance is not possible. And the greatest means to seek this support is the prayer, especially the *tahajjud* prayer, which is discussed in the next verse

وَمِنَ الَّيۡلِ فَتَهَجَّدۡ بِهٖ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ ۖ عَسٰٓى اَنۡ يَّبۡعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَّحۡمُوۡدًا ﴿۷۹﴾[79]

The word تهجد literally means to get up after sleeping a little at night. However, as a term, it refers to the prayer that is offered at night after sleeping a little. The ب in بِهٖ is for locus of time and the antecedent of the genitive pronoun is لیل.

The word نَافِلَةً means "additional." It is used in the positive sense always, implying abundance and addition in favours. It is not used for abundance and addition in harm. In other words, the Prophet (sws) is told that this *tajhajjud* prayer is additional for him. The word لَكَ signifies that it is an obligation the Prophet (sws) must fulfil. Thus all his life he offered it with diligence. As indicated earlier, this emphatic directive of being vigilant in prayers was to acquire the strength to counter Satanic forces. Precisely for this purpose, he was directed to offer the mandatory *tahajjud* prayer. About it, it is said that it was for his additional support and help. It will increase his patience and perseverance in countering the difficulties he will face in the cause of truth. Though this prayer is not an obligation for the common man, yet for those who embark upon fighting satanic forces and establishing the rule of truth on earth, this prayer is the greatest means of obtaining God's help. Thus righteous individuals who have had the opportunity to serve their religion have always adhered to this prayer.

The connotation of hope and expectation of the word عَسٰى when used with reference to God becomes associated with the addressees instead of God. Thus for example verse 8 of this very *sūrah* عَسٰى رَبُّكُمۡ اَنۡ يَّرۡحَمَكُمۡ would mean "You may hope that God will

79. And offer the *tahajjud* prayer at night also. This is additional for you. You may hope that your Lord will raise you such that you will be showered with praise.

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have mercy on you." Similarly, verse 83 of Sūrah Yūsuf عَسَى اللّٰهُ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَنِيْ بِهِمْ جَمِيْعًا would mean "I hope that God will bring everyone of them to me." The verse under discussion has been similarly translated. This interpretation also dispels the notion raised by those not conversant with the language that when everything is known to God, why should hope and expectation be ascribed to him? It may also be noted that the case of لَعَلَّ when used with God is no different.

In مَقَامًا مَّحْمُوْدًا, the word مَقَامًا in my opinion is not in the meaning of locus (*ẓarf*). It is in fact a verbal noun and here it is in the meaning of a stressed object (*maf'ūl muṭliq*). Since there is a similarity of meaning between بَعَثَ and مَقَام, the word بَعَثَ means "to raise" and مَقَام means "to stand and to rise;" hence there is nothing wrong in the word being regarded as a stressed object. The implication is that today these people are raising a deafening commotion to oppose and condemn the Prophet (sws), but he should adhere to his stance and be diligent in the prayer specially the *tahajjud* prayer and should hope that his Lord will raise him such that a great *ummah* will be praising him and God too will accept his efforts.

وَقُلْ رَّبِّ اَدْخِلْنِيْ مُدْخَلَ صِدْقٍ وَّاَخْرِجْنِيْ مُخْرَجَ صِدْقٍ وَّاجْعَلْ لِّيْ مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ سُلْطٰنًا نَّصِيْرًا ﴿۸۰﴾[80]

The قُلْ word here means "to pray." It is used in this meaning in the Qur'ān at a number of instances. One example can be seen in verse 29 of Sūrah al-Mu'minūn.

The word صِدْق means "stability and permanence" and the word سُلْطٰن signifies "dominance and authority."

It is evident from the previous verses that such were the adverse circumstances the Prophet (sws) was facing in Makkah that he had no option left by to migrate from there. However, God's Messengers never migrate from their people without God's permission. For this reason, the Prophet (sws) stood his ground with full perseverance and courage. This was the first instance in which he was asked to offer this supplication in which not only his migration is indicated but also carries glad tidings that his entry to a new city has been taken care of even before his departure from Makkah. His departure and entry will be with honour and stability and in his journey of migration, God's special help will guide him. The fact that the verse first mentions his entry shows that arrangements have been made for it even before his departure from Makkah. The words "especially from Your self" show that however much the circumstances appear adverse, his Lord will especially make this arrangement Himself. Deliberation shows that though the apparent words of this verse constitute a supplication, in reality, it is a great glad tiding given in precarious circumstances. If we read the details of the Prophet's journey and his entry into Madināh from history, it will appear that those who witnessed it found the words of the Qur'ān coming true

80. And pray: Lord! Let my entry be with honour and let my departure be with honour and bless me with a helping authority especially from Your self.

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word for word.

وَقُلْ جَآءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ ۭ اِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوْقًا ﴿٨١﴾[81]

The word حَقٌّ (truth) refers to the Qur'ān and the religion of truth brought by it and بَاطِلٌ (evil) refers to the evil religion to obliterate which it was revealed.

Earlier, the Prophet (sws) was instructed the supplication of migration. Now, in the prevailing unfavourable circumstances, he is asked to proclaim the triumph of the truth and defeat of the evil. The reason for this is that the migration of a messenger of God is in reality a prelude to the success of his call. After that his opponents are necessarily routed and the religion of truth prevails.

The sentence "and evil was bound to perish" indicates that evil has no basis in human nature. Like self-growing weeds and bushes, it only spreads when no one is there it to clean. However, when the cleaners are present, though they may have to undertake hardship to do away with such crap, ultimately it is routed. In its place, the lush green foliage of truth blossoms forth for the Almighty has made human nature such that only the seed of truth flourishes in it.

At the conquest of Makkah, this prophecy was fulfilled. At that time, the Prophet (sws) through his spear would dismember the idols placed in the Ka'bah while reciting this verse. It was as if its practical manifestation had appeared.

وَنُنَزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْاٰنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاۗءٌ وَّرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۙ وَلَا يَزِيْدُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ اِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿٨٢﴾[82]

This verse expresses sorrow and rebuke at the misfortune and evil fate of the rejecters of the Qur'ān: whatever the Almighty has revealed in it is an antidote to their spiritual and intellectual ailments; it is peace and mercy for them in its entirety; however, people who are unjust to their souls are only increasing their misfortune owing to this; this is because they are making themselves worthy of punishment both in this world and the next by denying the truth even after it has become apparent to them.

وَاِذَآ اَنْعَمْنَا عَلَي الْاِنْسَانِ اَعْرَضَ وَنَاٰ بِجَانِبِهٖ ۚ وَاِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ كَانَ يَـُٔوْسًا ﴿٨٣﴾[83]

The word اَلْاِنْسَان (human being) is a general one. However, here it refers to the miscreants of the Quraysh whose character is being previously discussed. They arrogantly evaded the Book of God and His Messenger, as is evident from the words:

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81. And declare: The truth has arrived and evil has perished and evil was bound to perish.

82. And what We reveal in this Qur'ān is a cure and mercy for the believers and this thing is only increasing the unjust in their loss.

83. And when We bless a human being with Our favour, he shows evasion and turns away. And when some calamity strikes him, he loses hope.

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"he shows evasion and turns away." It is for this reason that the Almighty referred to them by a general word.

The word وَنَا بِجَانِبِهٖ (to turn away) after اَعْرَضَ (evasion) portray their evasion. An evasion can also be decent and polite but when a person evades something because of hate and dislike, he physically turns away too.

The correct attitude should have been that these people should have expressed gratitude on God's favours and patience on trials. However, favours have made them arrogant to such an extent that they demand a sign of punishment from the Prophet (sws) when he calls them to the truth. If God seizes them, they will awake from their slumber but it would be too late. They will stand routed.

قُلْ كُلٌّ يَّعْمَلُ عَلٰى شَاكِلَتِهٖ ؕ فَرَبُّكُمْ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ هُوَ اَهْدٰى سَبِيْلًا ﴿۸۴﴾[84]

Though the word كُلٌّ is an indefinite noun, but in certain instances as is the case here, it becomes a definite noun. In such instances, it refers to all the groups or persons which are mentioned earlier.

The word شَاكِلَةٌ means "way." The implication is that if these people are not willing to listen to the Prophet (sws), they should do what they like and the Prophet (sws) should continue with his stance. The coming circumstances will divulge who reaches the destination.

In other words, this verse signifies the Prophet (sws) reposing trust in God. He is directed to consign their matter to God and strictly adhere to his view.

Section X (Verses 85-111)

In the succeeding verses, those objections of the opponents of the Prophet (sws) are responded to which they raised against him and his companions. At the same time, the demands they made as a condition for accepting faith are stated. Not only are these demands answered, assurance has also been sounded to the Prophet (sws). He is told that people who have the radiance of knowledge in them are professing faith in this Book. As for those, who are asking him for all kinds of signs, he should leave them to themselves: they will never accept faith whatsoever.

Readers my now proceed to study these verses.

Text and Translation

وَيَسْـَٔلُوْنَكَ عَنِ الرُّوْحِ ؕ قُلِ الرُّوْحُ مِنْ اَمْرِ رَبِّيْ وَمَآ اُوْتِيْتُمْ مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿۸۵﴾ وَلَئِنْ شِئْنَا لَنَذْهَبَنَّ بِالَّذِيْٓ

84. Say: Each will follow his own way. So your Lord knows full well those who are more on the right path.

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اَوۡحَيۡنَاۤ اِلَيۡكَ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ بِهٖ عَلَيۡنَا وَكِيۡلًا ﴿۸۶﴾ اِلَّا رَحۡمَةً مِّنۡ رَّبِّكَ ؕ اِنَّ فَضۡلَهٗ كَانَ عَلَيۡكَ كَبِيۡرًا ﴿۸۷﴾ قُلۡ لَّئِنِ
اجۡتَمَعَتِ الۡاِنۡسُ وَ الۡجِنُّ عَلٰۤى اَنۡ يَّاۡتُوۡا بِمِثۡلِ هٰذَا الۡقُرۡاٰنِ لَا يَاۡتُوۡنَ بِمِثۡلِهٖ وَ لَوۡ كَانَ بَعۡضُهُمۡ لِبَعۡضٍ ظَهِيۡرًا ﴿۸۸﴾ وَ
لَقَدۡ صَرَّفۡنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِىۡ هٰذَا الۡقُرۡاٰنِ مِنۡ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ ۫ فَاَبٰۤى اَكۡثَرُ النَّاسِ اِلَّا كُفُوۡرًا ﴿۸۹﴾ وَ قَالُوۡا لَنۡ نُّؤۡمِنَ لَكَ حَتّٰى تَفۡجُرَ
لَنَا مِنَ الۡاَرۡضِ يَنۡۢبُوۡعًا ﴿۹۰﴾ اَوۡ تَكُوۡنَ لَكَ جَنَّةٌ مِّنۡ نَّخِيۡلٍ وَّ عِنَبٍ فَتُفَجِّرَ الۡاَنۡهٰرَ خِلٰلَهَا تَفۡجِيۡرًا ﴿۹۱﴾ اَوۡ تُسۡقِطَ
السَّمَآءَ كَمَا زَعَمۡتَ عَلَيۡنَا كِسَفًا اَوۡ تَاۡتِىَ بِاللّٰهِ وَ الۡمَلٰٓئِكَةِ قَبِيۡلًا ﴿۹۲﴾ اَوۡ يَكُوۡنَ لَكَ بَيۡتٌ مِّنۡ زُخۡرُفٍ اَوۡ تَرۡقٰى فِى
السَّمَآءِ ؕ وَلَنۡ نُّؤۡمِنَ لِرُقِيِّكَ حَتّٰى تُنَزِّلَ عَلَيۡنَا كِتٰبًا نَّقۡرَؤُهٗ ؕ قُلۡ سُبۡحَانَ رَبِّىۡ هَلۡ كُنۡتُ اِلَّا بَشَرًا رَّسُوۡلًا ﴿۹۳﴾ وَ مَا
مَنَعَ النَّاسَ اَنۡ يُّؤۡمِنُوۡۤا اِذۡ جَآءَهُمُ الۡهُدٰۤى اِلَّاۤ اَنۡ قَالُوۡۤا اَبَعَثَ اللّٰهُ بَشَرًا رَّسُوۡلًا ﴿۹۴﴾ قُلۡ لَّوۡ كَانَ فِى الۡاَرۡضِ مَلٰٓئِكَةٌ
يَّمۡشُوۡنَ مُطۡمَئِنِّيۡنَ لَنَزَّلۡنَا عَلَيۡهِمۡ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ مَلَكًا رَّسُوۡلًا ﴿۹۵﴾ قُلۡ كَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ شَهِيۡدًا ۢ بَيۡنِىۡ وَ بَيۡنَكُمۡ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ
بِعِبَادِهٖ خَبِيۡرًا ۢ بَصِيۡرًا ﴿۹۶﴾ وَ مَنۡ يَّهۡدِ اللّٰهُ فَهُوَ الۡمُهۡتَدِ ۚ وَ مَنۡ يُّضۡلِلۡ فَلَنۡ تَجِدَ لَهُمۡ اَوۡلِيَآءَ مِنۡ دُوۡنِهٖ ؕ وَ نَحۡشُرُهُمۡ
يَوۡمَ الۡقِيٰمَةِ عَلٰى وُجُوۡهِهِمۡ عُمۡيًا وَّ بُكۡمًا وَّ صُمًّا ؕ مَاۡوٰىهُمۡ جَهَنَّمُ ؕ كُلَّمَا خَبَتۡ زِدۡنٰهُمۡ سَعِيۡرًا ﴿۹۷﴾ ذٰلِكَ جَزَآؤُهُمۡ بِاَنَّهُمۡ
كَفَرُوۡا بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَ قَالُوۡۤا ءَاِذَا كُنَّا عِظَامًا وَّ رُفَاتًا ءَاِنَّا لَمَبۡعُوۡثُوۡنَ خَلۡقًا جَدِيۡدًا ﴿۹۸﴾ اَوَ لَمۡ يَرَوۡا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ الَّذِىۡ خَلَقَ
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الۡاَرۡضَ قَادِرٌ عَلٰۤى اَنۡ يَّخۡلُقَ مِثۡلَهُمۡ وَ جَعَلَ لَهُمۡ اَجَلًا لَّا رَيۡبَ فِيۡهِ ؕ فَاَبَى الظّٰلِمُوۡنَ اِلَّا كُفُوۡرًا ﴿۹۹﴾ قُلۡ لَّوۡ
اَنۡتُمۡ تَمۡلِكُوۡنَ خَزَآئِنَ رَحۡمَةِ رَبِّىۡۤ اِذًا لَّاَمۡسَكۡتُمۡ خَشۡيَةَ الۡاِنۡفَاقِ ؕ وَ كَانَ الۡاِنۡسَانُ قَتُوۡرًا ﴿۱۰۰﴾ وَ لَقَدۡ اٰتَيۡنَا مُوۡسٰى
تِسۡعَ اٰيٰتٍۢ بَيِّنٰتٍ فَسۡـَٔلۡ بَنِىۡۤ اِسۡرَآءِيۡلَ اِذۡ جَآءَهُمۡ فَقَالَ لَهٗ فِرۡعَوۡنُ اِنِّىۡ لَاَظُنُّكَ يٰمُوۡسٰى مَسۡحُوۡرًا ﴿۱۰۱﴾ قَالَ لَقَدۡ
عَلِمۡتَ مَاۤ اَنۡزَلَ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ اِلَّا رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الۡاَرۡضِ بَصَآئِرَ ۚ وَ اِنِّىۡ لَاَظُنُّكَ يٰفِرۡعَوۡنُ مَثۡبُوۡرًا ﴿۱۰۲﴾ فَاَرَادَ اَنۡ يَّسۡتَفِزَّهُمۡ
مِّنَ الۡاَرۡضِ فَاَغۡرَقۡنٰهُ وَ مَنۡ مَّعَهٗ جَمِيۡعًا ﴿۱۰۳﴾ وَّ قُلۡنَا مِنۡۢ بَعۡدِهٖ لِبَنِىۡۤ اِسۡرَآءِيۡلَ اسۡكُنُوا الۡاَرۡضَ فَاِذَا جَآءَ وَعۡدُ
الۡاٰخِرَةِ جِئۡنَا بِكُمۡ لَفِيۡفًا ﴿۱۰۴﴾ وَ بِالۡحَقِّ اَنۡزَلۡنٰهُ وَ بِالۡحَقِّ نَزَلَ ؕ وَ مَاۤ اَرۡسَلۡنٰكَ اِلَّا مُبَشِّرًا وَّ نَذِيۡرًا ﴿۱۰۵﴾ وَ قُرۡاٰنًا
فَرَقۡنٰهُ لِتَقۡرَاَهٗ عَلَى النَّاسِ عَلٰى مُكۡثٍ وَّ نَزَّلۡنٰهُ تَنۡزِيۡلًا ﴿۱۰۶﴾ قُلۡ اٰمِنُوۡا بِهٖۤ اَوۡ لَا تُؤۡمِنُوۡا ؕ اِنَّ الَّذِيۡنَ اُوۡتُوا الۡعِلۡمَ مِنۡ
قَبۡلِهٖۤ اِذَا يُتۡلٰى عَلَيۡهِمۡ يَخِرُّوۡنَ لِلۡاَذۡقَانِ سُجَّدًا ﴿۱۰۷﴾ وَّ يَقُوۡلُوۡنَ سُبۡحٰنَ رَبِّنَاۤ اِنۡ كَانَ وَعۡدُ رَبِّنَا لَمَفۡعُوۡلًا ﴿۱۰۸﴾ وَ
يَخِرُّوۡنَ لِلۡاَذۡقَانِ يَبۡكُوۡنَ وَ يَزِيۡدُهُمۡ خُشُوۡعًا ﴿۱۰۹﴾ قُلِ ادۡعُوا اللّٰهَ اَوِ ادۡعُوا الرَّحۡمٰنَ ؕ اَيًّا مَّا تَدۡعُوۡا فَلَهُ الۡاَسۡمَآءُ

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الْحُسْنٰى ۚ وَلَا تَجْهَرْ بِصَلَاتِكَ وَلَا تُخَافِتْ بِهَا وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذٰلِكَ سَبِيْلًا ﴿١١٠﴾ وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَّلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهٗ شَرِيْكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهٗ وَلِيٌّ مِّنَ الذُّلِّ وَكَبِّرْهُ تَكْبِيْرًا ﴿١١١﴾

And they ask you about the *rūḥ*. Say: This *rūḥ* is from among the directives of my Lord and you have only been given very little knowledge. And if We want, We can take away what We have revealed to you. Then you will also not be able to find any helper for this against Us. This is only your God's bounty. Indeed, great is His bounty on you. Say: If all humankind and jinnkind combine to make such a Qur'ān, they will not be able to make a Qur'ān like this, even if they also become helpers of one another. (85-88)

And We have mentioned in this Qur'ān various words of wisdom for people in different ways. But most people are adamant on denying. And they say: "We shall not believe in what you say unless you make a spring gush from the earth or you have an orchard of dates or grapes; then unless you make canals run through it. Or unless, as you claim, you make pieces from the sky fall upon us or unless you bring God and His angels to stand before us or you not have a house of gold or you not climb to the sky. And We shall not even believe in your climbing unless you reveal a book to us from there that we can read" – Say: Exalted is my Lord. I am only a human being, a messenger of God. (89-93)

And when guidance came to them, the only thing that stopped these people from accepting faith was that they said: "Has God sent a human being as a messenger?" Say: Had there been angels walking about calmly on the earth, We would have sent down from the heavens an angel as a messenger to them. Say: Sufficient is God between you and me as a witness. Indeed, only He knows best His servants; He is watching them. And he whom God guides, only he will be guided and he whom He misleads, then for such misled you will not find any helper except Him. And, on the Day of Judgement, We shall gather the blind, the dumb and the deaf by dragging them by their faces. Their abode is Hell. Whenever its fire diminishes, We shall ignite it further. This would be their reward because they denied Our revelations and said: "What! When we become bones and are crushed to pieces, would we be recreated and raised to life?" Have they not thought that the God Who has created the heavens and the earth has the power to create their likes again? And He has appointed a time for them in which there is no doubt. But these unjust people became adamant in their denial. (94-99)

Say: If you owned the treasures of my Lord's bounty, at that time you would have stopped from spending them for fear of being consumed. Surely, a human being is very miserly. (100)

And We gave Moses nine clear signs. So, ask the Israelites that when he came to them, the Pharaoh said to him: "Moses! I think that you are under a magical spell." He replied: "You very well know that these signs have been sent down by the Lord of the

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heavens and the earth to open [your] eyes. And I think that O Pharaoh! You are a person doomed." After that, he planned to totally uproot them from the land. So, We drowned him as well as all those with him, and after this said to the Israelites: "Dwell you now in the land. Then when the promise of the Hereafter arrives, We shall bring you forth by gathering all of you." (101-104)

And We have revealed it with the truth and it is revealed with the truth. And We have sent you only as a bearer of glad tidings and warnings. And We have revealed this Qur'ān in parts so that you can gradually recite it to people and We have revealed it in a very elaborate way. Tell them: Whether you believe in it or not, when it is recited before those who were given knowledge before this, they fall on their chins in prostration and say: "Exalted is our Lord. Indeed, the promise of Our Lord was bound to be fulfilled," and fall on their chins weeping and this increases their humility. (105-109)

Say: Whether you call Him by Allah or by Raḥmān, by whichever name you call him, all good names are His. And do not offer your prayer very loudly or in a very low tone; adopt a middle way between the two. And say: worthy of gratitude is God Who neither has children nor is anyone His partner in His kingdom nor does He need any helper in times of helplessness. And proclaim His exaltedness the way it should be. (110-111)

Explanation

وَيَسْـَٔلُوْنَكَ عَنِ الرُّوْحِ ؕ قُلِ الرُّوْحُ مِنْ اَمْرِ رَبِّيْ وَمَآ اُوْتِيْتُمْ مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿۸۵﴾[85]

The word رُوْح here means "divine revelation." By signifying it by this name, the purpose is to show that just as the body needs رُوْح (spirit) to live, the life of our heart and intellect is divine revelation. Jesus (sws) has alluded to this reality thus: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." (Matthew, 4:4)

For precisely this reason, the Qur'an is called رُوْح (spirit) at various instances. For example:

يُنَزِّلُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ بِالرُّوْحِ مِنْ اَمْرِهٖ عَلٰى مَنْ يَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖٓ. (۱۶:۲)

He sends down the angels with the spirit in his matters on whomsoever He desires among His servants. (16:2)

يُلْقِى الرُّوْحَ مِنْ اَمْرِهٖ عَلٰى مَنْ يَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ. (۴۰:۱۵)

He sends the spirit which is among His matters to whomsoever servant He chooses. (40:15)

وَكَذٰلِكَ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ رُوْحًا مِّنْ اَمْرِنَا (۴۲:۵۲)

85. And they ask you about the *rūḥ*. Say: This *rūḥ* is from among the directives of my Lord and you have only been given very little knowledge.

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And thus have We revealed to you a spirit from our matters. (42:52)

The disbelievers would ask the Prophet (sws) about this spirit and their question was not an actual inquiry: it was to ridicule and make fun of it. The verse answers their question. It is not essential that they are informed of every secret of this universe and of their Lord. Only those understand this "spirit" who experiences it. One thing was concealed in this question: they wanted to inquire that why does divine revelation not descend on them too? To answer this aspect, the Qur'ān has used the words "to whomsoever servant He chooses," in some of the verses just cited. In other words, not every person is worthy of this.

The words "from His matters" and "from Our matters" point to the fact that only God knows their reality. Not everyone can acquire it.

وَلَئِنْ شِئْنَا لَنَذْهَبَنَّ بِالَّذِيْٓ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ لَا تَجِدُ لَكَ بِهٖ عَلَيْنَا وَكِيْلًا ﴿٨٦﴾ اِلَّا رَحْمَةً مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ ؕ اِنَّ فَضْلَهٗ كَانَ عَلَيْكَ كَبِيْرًا ﴿٨٧﴾[86]

Though these verses address the Prophet (sws), it is actually directed at people whose question was cited in the previous verse. The implication is that the Prophet (sws) has no voluntary role in acquiring divine revelation; it is neither given to him at his desire nor can he refuse it; he does not even have the power to keep it with him if God wanted to take it away; it is only God Who governs sending divine revelation and it is a great bounty on His part.

قُلْ لَّئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْاِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلٰٓى اَنْ يَّاْتُوْا بِمِثْلِ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ لَا يَاْتُوْنَ بِمِثْلِهٖ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيْرًا ﴿٨٨﴾[87]

Obviously, when the desire or effort of the Prophet (sws) cannot be instrumental in acquiring divine revelation and he too cannot present such a Book from his own intention, one can imagine the nature of claim of others in this regard. How can others dare produce such a Book? Even if mankind and jinnkind collaborate in this matter, they will never succeed. This challenge of the Qur'ān is fourteen centuries old and history bears witness that none from the four corners of this world dared to accept this challenge, and if ever someone did try to imitate it, he became a laughing stock.

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِيْ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ ۭ فَاَبٰٓى اَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ اِلَّا كُفُوْرًا ﴿٨٩﴾[88]

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86. And if We want, We can take away what We have revealed to you. Then you will also not be able to find any helper for this against Us. This is only your God's bounty. Indeed, great is His bounty on you.

87. Say: If all humankind and jinnkind combine to make such a Qur'ān, they will not be able to make a Qur'ān like this, even if they also become helpers of one another.

88. And We have mentioned in this Qur'ān various words of wisdom for people in different

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The word تصریف here means to mention something in different styles and multiple ways and the expression ضرب المثل means to state words of wisdom and sagacity. It is commonly used in Arabic in this meaning. A Ḥamāsī poet says:

یابَدرُوَالاَمثالُ

یَضرِبُھالِذی اللُبِّ الحَکیمُ

(O Badr! A wise person states words of wisdom for the sensible only)[89]

The implication of this verse is that after the revelation of this miraculous book in which every word of wisdom is mentioned in various styles and ways, these people are left with no excuse to say that God's guidance did not reach them. The Book of God has conclusively communicated the truth to them. If even after this, the majority of people are adamant on denying, then this is their own misfortune and wretchedness.

وَ قَالُوْا لَنْ نُّؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتّٰى تَفْجُرَ لَنَا مِنَ الْاَرْضِ يَنْۢبُوْعًا ﴿۹۰﴾ اَوْ تَكُوْنَ لَكَ جَنَّةٌ مِّنْ نَّخِيْلٍ وَّ عِنَبٍ فَتُفَجِّرَ الْاَنْهٰرَ خِلٰلَهَا
تَفْجِيْرًا ﴿۹۱﴾ اَوْ تُسْقِطَ السَّمَآءَ كَمَا زَعَمْتَ عَلَيْنَا كِسَفًا اَوْ تَاْتِيَ بِاللّٰهِ وَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ قَبِيْلًا ﴿۹۲﴾ اَوْ يَكُوْنَ لَكَ بَيْتٌ مِّنْ زُخْرُفٍ
اَوْ تَرْقٰى فِي السَّمَآءِ ؕ وَ لَنْ نُّؤْمِنَ لِرُقِيِّكَ حَتّٰى تُنَزِّلَ عَلَيْنَا كِتٰبًا نَّقْرَؤُهٗ ؕ قُلْ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيْ هَلْ كُنْتُ اِلَّا بَشَرًا رَّسُوْلًا ﴿۹۳﴾[90]

When the word ایمان is used with the preposition ل, it does not mean to accept faith; it only means to acknowledge something. These verses allude to the demands of the Prophet's opponents which they stated as a condition to attest to his propethood. At the end, he answers these demands by saying that he has never claimed to be share divinity so that such demands are being made from him. His Lord is exalted beyond having any partners, and the Prophet (sws) is only a human being and His messenger. In this capacity, his duty is to only deliver the message of God and has no authority to make these demands meet.

وَ مَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ اَنْ يُّؤْمِنُوْٓا اِذْ جَآءَهُمُ الْهُدٰٓى اِلَّآ اَنْ قَالُوْٓا اَبَعَثَ اللّٰهُ بَشَرًا رَّسُوْلًا ﴿۹۴﴾[91]

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ways. But most people are adamant on denying.

89. Al-Tabrayzī, *Dīwān al-ḥamāsah*, vol. 2, 46.

90. And they say: "We shall not believe in what you say unless you make a spring gush from the earth or you have an orchard of dates or grapes; then unless you make canals run through it. Or unless, as you claim, you make pieces from the sky fall upon us or unless you bring God and His angels to stand before us or you not have a house of gold or you not climb to the sky. And We shall not even believe in your climbing unless you reveal a book to us from there that we can read" – Say: Exalted is my Lord. I am only a human being, a messenger of God

91. And when guidance came to them, the only thing that stopped these people from accepting faith was that they said: "Has God sent a human being as a messenger?"

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The word الْهُدٰٓى means the clear guidance of God with all its arguments and rationale. The implication of this verse is that as far as God's guidance is concerned, it has come before them in a very clear form with incontestable proofs. The excuse they present that why a human being was sent as a messenger is extremely lame and lousy. It is a mere expression of their arrogance.

قُلْ لَّوْ كَانَ فِي الْاَرْضِ مَلٰٓئِكَةٌ يَّمْشُوْنَ مُطْمَئِنِّيْنَ لَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ مَلَكًا رَّسُوْلًا ﴿٩٥﴾[92]

The implication of this verse is that a messenger has to belong to the same species as his addressees because he is sent as an exemplar for them. How can an angel play this role for human beings?

The words "walking about calmly on the earth" indicate that if angels descend on the earth, it is only for the implementation of God's intent and under His command. They are not permanent residents here.

قُلْ كَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ شَهِيْدًا بَيْنِيْ وَبَيْنَكُمْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهٖ خَبِيْرًا بَصِيْرًا ﴿٩٦﴾[93]

After conclusive communication of the truth, the Prophet (sws) is now directed to consign the matter of his adversaries to God. Sufficient is the witness of God to show that it is not the lack of arguments which is not making them accept faith; it is in fact their arrogance and egotism that is the real cause. The Almighty Who is fully aware of every aspect of His people will decide whether the veracity of his prophethood became evident to them or not. He will judge if in spite of being convinced they did not accept it or otherwise.

وَمَنْ يَّهْدِ اللّٰهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ ۚ وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلْ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُمْ اَوْلِيَآءَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ ؕ وَنَحْشُرُهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ عَلٰى وُجُوْهِهِمْ عُمْيًا وَّبُكْمًا وَّصُمًّا ؕ مَاْوٰىهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ ؕ كُلَّمَا خَبَتْ زِدْنٰهُمْ سَعِيْرًا ﴿٩٧﴾[94]

This verse explains the established practice of God regarding providing guidance. The foundation on which it is based is referred to by the words: "and, on the Day of Judgement, We shall gather the blind, the dumb and the deaf by dragging them by their faces." In other words, those who use their eyes to see the signs of God and their

92. Say: Had there been angels walking about calmly on the earth, We would have sent down from the heavens an angel as a messenger to them.

93. Say: Sufficient is God between you and me as a witness. Indeed, only He knows best His servants; He is watching them.

94. And he whom God guides, only he will be guided and he whom He misleads, then for such misled you will not find any helper except Him. And, on the Day of Judgement, We shall gather the blind, the dumb and the deaf by dragging them by their faces. Their abode is Hell. Whenever its fire diminishes, We shall ignite it further.

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tongues to bear witness to the truth and their ears to hear the words of God and his Prophet (sws) receive God's guidance. As for those who possess all these faculties and become blind, deaf and dumb, they never receive God's guidance. Since the addressees of the Prophet (sws) were precisely of this type, they would never be guided; on the Day of Judgement they would be punished by God for not duly valuing these favours by being dragged on their faces such that they would be blind, deaf and dumb. In verse 48 of Sūrah al-Qamar, the words used are: يَوْمَ يُسْحَبُوْنَ فِي النَّارِ عَلٰى وُجُوْهِهِمْ ۭ ذُوْقُوْا مَسَّ سَقَرَ.[95]

Faces which were blessed with the faculties of sight, hearing and speech and still they chose to remain deaf, dumb and blind are undoubtedly only worthy of being dragged into Hell whose fire never extinguishes.

ذٰلِكَ جَزَاۗؤُهُمْ بِاَنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَقَالُوْٓا ءَاِذَا كُنَّا عِظَامًا وَّرُفَاتًا ءَاِنَّا لَمَبْعُوْثُوْنَ خَلْقًا جَدِيْدًا ۝۹۸[96]

The implication of this verse is that this punishment will be given to them because in spite of observing the signs of God's power and of raising the dead to life, they remained adamant on their denial. They contended that their resurrection was absolutely impossible. However, God will show it to be possible.

اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ قَادِرٌ عَلٰٓي اَنْ يَّخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَهُمْ اَجَلًا لَّا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ ۭ فَاَبَى الظّٰلِمُوْنَ اِلَّا كُفُوْرًا ۝۹۹[97]

The verse prods them on regarding their resurrection to be far-fetched. Is recreating the heavens and the earth more difficult than creating them again?

The time of the Day of Judgement is fixed. They should not show haste in its arrival.

قُلْ لَّوْ اَنْتُمْ تَمْلِكُوْنَ خَزَاۗىِٕنَ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّيْٓ اِذًا لَّاَمْسَكْتُمْ خَشْيَةَ الْاِنْفَاقِ ۭ وَكَانَ الْاِنْسَانُ قَتُوْرًا ۝۱۰۰[98]

It has been pointed out earlier that the basic reason of denial of the Quraysh's

95. They should remember the Day when they shall be dragged face-downwards into the flames of Hell. Taste ye now the sensation of Hell.

96. This would be their reward because they denied Our revelations and said: "What! When we become bones and are crushed to pieces, would we be recreated and raised to life?"

97. Have they not thought that the God Who has created the heavens and the earth has the power to create their likes again? And He has appointed a time for them in which there is no doubt. But these unjust people became adamant in their denial.

98. Say: If you owned the treasures of my Lord's bounty, at that time you would have stopped from spending them for fear of being consumed. Surely, a human being is very miserly.

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leadership was its arrogance. They contended that when they have received all the favours of this world, God should have blessed them with prophethood too; why did He consign it to a poor person. The verse addresses this haughty notion of theirs.

Though a general word "human being" is used, it actually refers to the same people who are under discussion. If they are stingy and have no place for anyone else in their hearts, why do they regard God to be like them.

وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسٰى تِسْعَ اٰيٰتٍۭ بَيِّنٰتٍ فَسْـَٔلْ بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ اِذْ جَآءَهُمْ فَقَالَ لَهٗ فِرْعَوْنُ اِنِّيْ لَاَظُنُّكَ يٰمُوْسٰى مَسْحُوْرًا ﴿١٠١﴾[99]

Earlier in verses 90-93, the miracles which the Quryash demanded are mentioned. This verse answers that demand: faith and guidance are not obtained through miracles. Moses (sws) was equipped with nine miracles but the Pharaoh regarded him to be a mad man. In other words, the Prophet (sws) is being assured that if he shows his addressees the miracles they were demanding, their response too would be no different.

The expression "so, ask the Israelites" carries a subtle insinuation: by that time, the Israelites had fully become part of the campaign against Islam and the Quraysh would mostly make the demand of miracles at their behest. They told the Quraysh that their own prophet showed them certain miracles and that if he too was a prophet, then he too should work miracles. It is because of this that the Qur'ān has asked them to bear witness to what they did with the miracles their own prophet showed them. If the result was that the Pharaoh and his people were drowned, then why are they showing this way to the Quraysh?

قَالَ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَآ اَنْزَلَ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ اِلَّا رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ بَصَآئِرَ ۚ وَاِنِّيْ لَاَظُنُّكَ يٰفِرْعَوْنُ مَثْبُوْرًا ﴿١٠٢﴾[100]

The word مَثْبُوْرًا refers to someone who is doomed.

The answer given by Moses (sws) to the Pharaoh is in the same vein.

فَاَرَادَ اَنْ يَّسْتَفِزَّهُمْ مِّنَ الْاَرْضِ فَاَغْرَقْنٰهُ وَمَنْ مَّعَهٗ جَمِيْعًا ﴿١٠٣﴾[101]

The Pharaoh and his followers tried their best to uproot Moses (sws) from the land. As a result, they were punished for this. This punishment took the form of drowning in the sea.

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99. And We gave Moses nine clear signs. So, ask the Israelites that when he came to them, the Pharaoh said to him: "Moses! I think that you are under a magical spell."

100 He replied: "You very well know that these signs have been sent down by the Lord of the heavens and the earth to open [your] eyes. And I think that O Pharaoh! You are a person doomed."

101 After that, he planned to totally uproot them from the land. So, We drowned him as well as all those with him.

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وَّقُلْنَا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ لِبَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ اسْكُنُوا الْاَرْضَ فَاِذَا جَآءَ وَعْدُ الْاٰخِرَةِ جِئْنَا بِكُمْ لَفِيْفًا ﴿١٠٤﴾[102]

This is a mention of the favour showed by God to the Israelites once their opponents had been punished. Concomitant indications show that the word الْاَرْض refers to the holy land the Israelites were promised. While fulfilling this promise, the Almighty also reminded them of the promise of the Hereafter; they were warned that being elated on their worldly success, they should not forget the life to come. Just as God has brought them there as per His promise, He will bring them one day to the assembly of the Hereafter. Yet, the Israelites totally forgot this reminder.

وَبِالْحَقِّ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ وَبِالْحَقِّ نَزَلَ ؕ وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ اِلَّا مُبَشِّرًا وَّنَذِيْرًا ﴿١٠٥﴾[103]

Readers may keep this in mind that the current discourse began with the mention of divine revelation and the Qur'ān. After that, certain related issues were discussed. Once they finished, the original topic is once again reverted to: such is the pure nature of the Qur'ān that there is no chance that any falsehood can enter it from any where. If these people are creating doubts in such an unadulterated discourse, the Prophet (sws) should know that he is not responsible for the faith and guidance of such unreasonable people. He is only a warner and a deliverer of glad tidings. Once he has fulfilled this responsibility, he should leave them to themselves. If they do not listen to him, they alone will bear its consequences.

وَقُرْاٰنًا فَرَقْنٰهُ لِتَقْرَاَهٗ عَلَى النَّاسِ عَلٰى مُكْثٍ وَّنَزَّلْنٰهُ تَنْزِيْلًا ﴿١٠٦﴾[104]

The implication of this verse is that if this Qur'ān is being gradually revealed, it is not because the Prophet (sws) prepares it in portions and then recites it out to them. The reason for its revelation in parts is because he can gradually recite it out to his people so that they can fully digest it. They think that if it had been a divine Book, it should necessarily have been revealed in one go because God does not need any preparation. This notion is not correct. No doubt, God does not need any preparation. He could have revealed the Book in one episode. However, He gave due consideration to the needs and circumstances of His creatures. He thus revealed it in portions in a very elaborate way. This latter meaning is evident from the word تَنْزِيْل.

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102 And after this said to the Israelites: "Dwell you now in the land. Then when the promise of the Hereafter arrives, We shall bring you forth by gathering all of you."

103 And We have revealed it with the truth and it is revealed with the truth. And We have sent you only as a bearer of glad tidings and warnings.

104 And We have revealed this Qur'ān in parts so that you can gradually recite it to people and We have revealed it in a very elaborate way.

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قُلْ اٰمِنُوْا بِهٖۤ اَوْ لَا تُؤْمِنُوْا ؕ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهٖۤ اِذَا يُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ يَخِرُّوْنَ لِلْاَذْقَانِ سُجَّدًا ﴿۱۰۷﴾ وَّ يَقُوْلُوْنَ سُبْحٰنَ رَبِّنَاۤ اِنْ كَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّنَا لَمَفْعُوْلًا ﴿۱۰۸﴾ وَيَخِرُّوْنَ لِلْاَذْقَانِ يَبْكُوْنَ وَيَزِيْدُهُمْ خُشُوْعًا ﴿۱۰۹﴾[105]

It is evident from concomitant indications that the expression "those who were given knowledge before this" refers to the righteous among the People of the Book. Just as there were miscreants among them who were expending all their power to oppose the Qur'ān, there was a righteous group among them who in accordance with the prophecies of their prophets and their scriptures was actually waiting for a messenger and a book. This group regarded the Prophet (sws) and the Book he brought as a manifestation of these prophecies. So such were they that when the Qur'ān would be recited to them, they would fall down in prostration and would wholeheartedly thank God for the fulfilment of His promise. These verses refer to this blessed group. The Prophet (sws) was directed that he was to declare to the disbelievers among the Quraysh and the Israelites that whether they accepted faith or not, it was sufficient for his own satisfaction that there existed a group among the People of the Book that prostrated as soon as it heard the Qur'ān and when it saw that God had fulfilled His promise, tears of both gatitude and humility trickled down from its eyes. Tears of gratitude are understandable. As far as tears of humility are concerned, they are because this reminds afresh the promise of the Hereafter that the Lord Who has fulfilled this promise will surely fulfil His promise of the Hereafter.

قُلِ ادْعُوا اللّٰهَ اَوِ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمٰنَ ؕ اَيًّامَّا تَدْعُوْا فَلَهُ الْاَسْمَآءُ الْحُسْنٰى ۚ وَلَا تَجْهَرْ بِصَلَاتِكَ وَلَا تُخَافِتْ بِهَا وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذٰلِكَ سَبِيْلًا ﴿۱۱۰﴾[106]

When doubts and evil estimations find their way in something, then all things that relate to it also start seeming doubtful. In the times of *jāhiliyyah*, the Arabs would use both Allāh and Raḥmān as names of God. Thus classical Arabic poetry mentions both. It can however be said that the name Raḥmān was more popular with the People of The Book. The Arab intelligentsia made this name a means of objection on the Qur'ān. They posited that some among the people of the Book help the Prophet (sws) in preparing this Book. The Qur'ān (25:4) has referred to this objection. Later when the name Raḥmān caught their attention, they retorted that his use of this name shows

105 Tell them: Whether you believe in it or not, when it is recited before those who were given knowledge before this, they fall on their chins in prostration and say: "Exalted is our Lord. Indeed, the promise of Our Lord was bound to be fulfilled," and fall on their chins weeping and this increases their humility.

106 Say: Whether you call Him by Allah or by Raḥmān, by whichever name you call him, all good names are His. And do not offer your prayer very loudly or in a very low tone; adopt a middle way between the two.

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his connections with the People of the Book. From here they must have concluded that this person was trying to impose on them the traditions and religion of the People of the Book.

The Qur'ān has answered this objection in this verse and implied that bias towards a name should not be a cause of accepting the truth. God has several names and He can be called by every name that befits His majesty.

It is evident from the last part of the verse that the Idolaters also had a similar objection on the manner of praying of the Muslims. In their religion, making noise, clapping and whistling had a special status in worship. On the contrary, prayer rituals of Islam are solemn and carry dignity. It may well be that they connected this dignity in praying with the People of the Book and made it an excuse of objection.

The Qur'ān directed the Prophet (sws) that his prayers and supplications should neither be very loud nor very low in tone. Their pitch should be moderate. This is an indication to the fact that since Muslims are a middle *ummah*, their prayers and supplications too should have moderation in them.

وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِیْ لَمْ یَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَّلَمْ یَكُنْ لَّهٗ شَرِیْكٌ فِی الْمُلْكِ وَلَمْ یَكُنْ لَّهٗ وَلِیٌّ مِّنَ الذُّلِّ وَكَبِّرْهُ تَكْبِیْرًا ﴿۱۱۱﴾[107]

Here at the end of the *sūrah*, the Prophet (sws) is asked to extol and exalt God and declare His sole sovereignty regardless of where these people may wander and stumble. The words "nor does He need any helper in times of helplessness" indicate that helpers and supporters are needed by those for whom lurks the danger of helplessness. How can the God Whose majesty and splendour is beyond any such state need helpers. The Prophet (sws) should declare His exaltedness regardless of what the Idolaters are doing.

With these lines, the explanation of this *sūrah* reaches its completion.

وَاٰخِرُ دَعْوٰىهُمْ اَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِیْنَ (Our last declaration is that gratitude be to God, Lord of the worlds)

Lahore
27th April, 1971

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107 And say: worthy of gratitude is God Who neither has children nor is anyone His partner in His kingdom nor does He need any helper in times of helplessness. And proclaim His exaltedness the way it should be.

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Sūrah al-Kahf

Period of Revelation, Theme and Relationship with the Previous Sūrah

Like the previous *sūrah*, this *sūrah* was also revealed in that part of the Makkan period when the conflict between good and evil of the Prophet's preaching mission had entered its final phase. The Quraysh with all their guiles were preparing to completely obliterate the message of the Qur'ān. The Jews and the Christians too, as was indicated earlier, were supporting them so that this new message could wiped out through the Quraysh right at the place where it was initiated from, and they themselves were not needed to openly engage in conflict.

In the background of these circumstances, there a few special aspects that have become prominent in the *sūrah*:

1. The Quryash are warned that in the wake of their worldly successes they should not try to arrogantly deny an obvious reality. Now the punishment of God is hovering over them. If they do not desist from their arrogance, not far is the time when this punishment will visit them.

2. The Prophet (sws) and his companions are urged to be patient and steadfast. Certain subtle indications are made of the upcoming phases of migration etc and glad tidings are given to them in these phases regarding certain victories they will achieve at the behest of God.

3. Just as in the previous *sūrah*, Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl, the Jews are exposed, in this *sūrah* and in the next one – Sūrah Maryam – the Christians are exposed. The purpose is to warn the Quryash that if at the behest of those who themselves have no basis they deny this great favour which God wants to bestow on the, they will lose an opportunity that is knocking at their doors because of the enmity others have for it.

Analysis

Verses (1-8): The Prophet (sws) is urged to be patient since his only responsibility is to warn and give glad tidings to his nation. If the rebellious among them are not professing faith in the Qur'ān, it is not because there is something wrong in this Book or there is something lacking in his preaching. The reason for this is that these people have become blind in their infatuation with the lures of this world. He should not fret over such people. A day will come when the artificial make-up of this world will become evident and its actual face will be exposed. At that time, these people will utterly regret their behaviour.

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Verses (9-26): An objection raised by the Prophet's opponents regarding the dwellers of the cave is answered. As a result, their real life aside from needless details becomes evident. In its reflection, it is shown to the Prophet (sws) and his companions that the phase of preaching they are passing through was also encountered by the dwellers of the cave. If like them, they too persevere on the right path in spite of all the dangers they may face, God will ease out their hardships the way He did so for them. He will provide them with the means and resources the way He provided them. He never lets those who perseverance for His cause lose their way.

Verses (27-31): The Prophet (sws) is urged to focus his attention to his poor and indigent companions while disregarding those who have become slaves to the wealth of this world. These companions may be deprived of worldly wealth but they have the wealth of faith in abundance. They are engrossed in God's remembrance day and night and spreading the message of His religion. In this regard, God has also stopped the Prophet (sws) to grieve at the attitude of the disbelievers: if they are not professing faith, he should leave them to themselves. They will be dealt with according to the established practice of God and no one can change this practice.

Verses (32-49): A similitude is cited to show that the reminder of the Hereafter weighs down heavily on those who think that the real success is the success of this world. They regard their worldly successes to be a proof that it is they who are following the right path. For this reason, when a servant of God warns them of the Hereafter, they ask him if they are better off or him? If the answer is obviously that they are better off, why should they not believe their own beliefs and practices are correct too? Such people are never prepared to believe that the riches and good fortune they have today will ever be taken away from them. They regard the Hereafter to be very farfetched and if they hypothetically do believe in it, they do so by thinking that if these fanatic Muslims warn them of the Hereafter, they will have a high status there too since they are very successful in this world. The purpose of citing this similitude is to make evident to the Prophet (sws) that today he is facing exactly the same type of arrogant people. These people are not going to listen to him. They will only realize when it is too late – when they will be visited by God's scourge. He should make them understand the reality of this world and this life – which has lured them away – through a similitude that the pleasures of this life are all transient. Nothing of this world will go with them. Only their righteous deeds will go with them. So they who want to gather something for the next world should gather these deeds.

Verses (50-59): The anecdote of Adam (sws) and Satan is reminded of. The purpose is to warn the arrogant Quraysh of their wretchedness: they have made Satan and his progeny their friends and guardians because of their own evil ways even though he is an open enemy of Adam's progeny. In this regard, they are rebuked on their wretchedness: God blessed them with a great favour when He sent down to them a Book that explains the truth in various ways. However, instead of accepting it, these people became adamant in their demand to show them a sign of the punishment the

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Qur'ān was warning them of. God, however, is very merciful and gracious. His mercy supersedes His punishment. Yet these wretched people hastily demand His punishment.

Verses (60-82): The anecdote of a journey undertaken by Moses (sws) is narrated. It was undertaken at God's behest to train and instruct him. The purpose was to make him aware of certain secrets of this universe with the help of a special person: whatever happens in this world happens with God's will and this will is entirely based on wisdom. In this world, it apparently seems that the unjust and the rebellious are given the opportunity to make hay and the adherents of the truth are made to pass through various trials and tribulations. This situation causes the faith of many to dwindle and it becomes very difficult for them to remain on the right path. In this trial, only those people remain steadfast who fully know that whatever is happening here is happening under God's will and under the requisites of His wisdom. However, their limited knowledge cannot grasp the wisdom and expediencies envisaged by the Almighty. For this reason, the correct attitude in this regard is that whatever adverse circumstances people face while treading the path of truth, they should not get frustrated and disappointed; in fact, they should adhere to their stance in a steadfast manner and wait for the manifestation of God's wisdom and hope that if not in this world, it will definitely manifest in the next.

This wisdom is foundation of patience on which the whole edifice of religion stands. Thus when God chose Moses (sws) for a great mission, He sent him to a special person who could train him in this trait of patience because it can only be learnt through practice. This anecdote has been narrated to the Prophet (sws) and through him to his followers so that they should not be over-awed and scared to see the rebellious and the defiant spreading mischief while they themselves are being oppressed in spite of adhering to the truth. If in this world a hole is drilled in the ship of the poor, there is great wisdom in it and if in the city of oppressors a dilapidated wall that is about to fall is restored, there is profound wisdom in it too but the limited knowledge of human beings is not able to grasp all these secrets of God.

Verses (83-101): While answering a question, a just ruler – Dhu al-Qarnayn – is mentioned. The purpose is to make the rebellious among the Quraysh learn a lesson. They regarded the warnings of the Prophet (sws) to be a joke and their own political authority to be eternal. By referring to him, they are told at their own query that even after conquering all the territories of the east and the west, he regarded all his victories to be a blessing of God. He would take every step according to the will of God. On the other hand, such are they that by getting a small share of political leadership, they have become so inebriated with it that they have started to make fun of God and the Hereafter.

Verses (102-110): This is the concluding section of the *sūrah*. The topic of warning is once again brought up with which the *sūrah* began. It is as if at the end, a reminder is sounded in a new style about a reality which is actually the theme of the *sūrah.* At the

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same time, people who were making fun of the replete with wisdom statements of the Qur'ān and demanding a miracle are answered. They are told that if they have eyes to see, there are so many signs of God in the world within them and that around them that if oceans become ink, even then they cannot all be penned. At the end, it is declared from the tongue of the Prophet (sws) that showing signs and miracles is the prerogative of God. He himself is a servant of God like them. He recites out before them whatever is divinely revealed to him.

This concise analysis of the meanings of the *sūrah* is sufficient to explain its coherence and central theme. With God's name, I now begin its exegesis. May God help me.

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Section 1: Verses (1-8)

Text and Translation

بِسۡمِ اللّٰہِ الرَّحۡمٰنِ الرَّحِیۡمِ

اَلۡحَمۡدُ لِلّٰہِ الَّذِیۡۤ اَنۡزَلَ عَلٰی عَبۡدِہِ الۡکِتٰبَ وَ لَمۡ یَجۡعَلۡ لَّہٗ عِوَجًا ؕ﴿۱﴾ قَیِّمًا لِّیُنۡذِرَ بَاۡسًا شَدِیۡدًا مِّنۡ لَّدُنۡہُ وَ یُبَشِّرَ الۡمُؤۡمِنِیۡنَ الَّذِیۡنَ یَعۡمَلُوۡنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَہُمۡ اَجۡرًا حَسَنًا ۙ﴿۲﴾ مَّاکِثِیۡنَ فِیۡہِ اَبَدًا ۙ﴿۳﴾ وَّ یُنۡذِرَ الَّذِیۡنَ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللّٰہُ وَلَدًا ﴿۴﴾ مَا لَہُمۡ بِہٖ مِنۡ عِلۡمٍ وَّ لَا لِاٰبَآئِہِمۡ ؕ کَبُرَتۡ کَلِمَۃً تَخۡرُجُ مِنۡ اَفۡوَاہِہِمۡ ؕ اِنۡ یَّقُوۡلُوۡنَ اِلَّا کَذِبًا ﴿۵﴾ فَلَعَلَّکَ بَاخِعٌ نَّفۡسَکَ عَلٰۤی اٰثَارِہِمۡ اِنۡ لَّمۡ یُؤۡمِنُوۡا بِہٰذَا الۡحَدِیۡثِ اَسَفًا ﴿۶﴾ اِنَّا جَعَلۡنَا مَا عَلَی الۡاَرۡضِ زِیۡنَۃً لَّہَا لِنَبۡلُوَہُمۡ اَیُّہُمۡ اَحۡسَنُ عَمَلًا ﴿۷﴾ وَ اِنَّا لَجٰعِلُوۡنَ مَا عَلَیۡہَا صَعِیۡدًا جُرُزًا ؕ﴿۸﴾

In the name of God, the Most-Gracious, the Ever-Merciful.

Gratitude is for the God Who revealed the Book to His servant and did not leave any ambiguity in it. It is very lucid and effective so that it can inform the rejecters of a stern torment from Him and give glad tidings to the believers who are doing righteous deeds that for them is a very nice reward wherein they shall abide forever and inform those who say: "God has begotten children." They do not have any knowledge of this matter: neither they, nor their forefathers. Very grave are the words which they are uttering from their mouths. It is mere lies that they are speaking. (1-5)

So you may well take your life because of sorrow while venturing after them if they do not profess faith in this word. Whatever is on the earth, We have made it its adornment so that We test people that who among them does good deeds. And We shall ultimately destroy all the things on it making everything a barren field. (6-8)

Explanation

اَلۡحَمۡدُ لِلّٰہِ الَّذِیۡۤ اَنۡزَلَ عَلٰی عَبۡدِہِ الۡکِتٰبَ وَ لَمۡ یَجۡعَلۡ لَّہٗ عِوَجًا ؕ﴿۱﴾[1]

This *sūrah* begins with the same topic on which the previous *sūrah* ended (see verses: 105-111). The obligation the Arabs owe to the favour that God has bestowed

1. Gratitude is for the God Who revealed the Book to His servant and did not leave any ambiguity in it.

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on them in the form of the Qur'ān is to show gratitude and not otherwise. Unfortunate are the people who are not valuing this favour and inventing all kinds of excuses every now and then to deny it.

One of the attributes of this Book is that it has no ambiguity or complexity in it, neither in its text nor in its meaning. It is in lucid Arabic and it guides people to the straight path. Arguments which reinforce this straight path are found not only in human nature and intellect but also in the world within and outside human beings. The Qur'ān has presented them in such a variety of ways that no one who uses his intellect can be deprived of them. In verse 9 of Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl, this very attribute of the Qur'ān is referred to thus: اِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَهْدِيْ لِلَّتِيْ هِيَ اَقْوَمُ (indeed, this Qur'ān guides to the path that is straight).

قَيِّمًا لِّيُنْذِرَ بَاْسًا شَدِيْدًا مِّنْ لَّدُنْهُ وَ يُبَشِّرَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا حَسَنًا ۙ﴿۲﴾ مَّاكِثِيْنَ فِيْهِ اَبَدًا ۙ﴿۳﴾ وَّيُنْذِرَ الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللّٰهُ وَلَدًا ۚ﴿۴﴾[2]

The first of these verses states the purpose for which this Book was revealed. In the first part of the first verse, the word لِلْكَافِرِيْنَ or لِلْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ is suppressed as evidenced by the parallel mention of the word الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ahead.

The subject of the verb لِّيُنْذِرَ can be God and the Prophet (sws) also who is referred to in the previous verse by the word عَبْد.

In the first case, the meaning would be that God has revealed this specially from Himself to inform the disbelievers of a grave torment.

In the second case, the meaning would be that God's messenger informs people of divine punishment.

In the first case, the word مِّنْ لَّدُنْهُ would signify special attention and favour of God and in the second case, it would refer to the intensity of the torment: this torment would not be an ordinary one; it would be God's wrath from which no one will be able to save them.

The words "wherein they shall abide forever" mean that they will abide in the nice reward forever. They actually refer to Paradise. This would be the consequence of the "nice reward." Referring to the consequence of a thing while mentioning the thing is a common Arabic style, examples of which can be seen in earlier *sūrahs* as well as in the succeeding ones.

The last of the above mentioned verses is a mention of the specific after the general. The implication is that those people should be specially warned who worship partners they ascribe to God and have become oblivious to God while depending entirely on

2. It is very lucid and effective so that it can inform the rejecters of a stern torment from Him and give glad tidings to the believers who are doing righteous deeds that for them is a very nice reward wherein they shall abide forever and inform those who say: "God has begotten children."

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the intercession of these partners. This refers both to the idolaters of Arabia and to the Christians. The Idolaters regarded the angels to be daughters of God and the Christians regarded Jesus (sws) to be the son of God.

مَا لَهُمْ بِهٖ مِنْ عِلْمٍ وَّلَا لِاٰبَآىِٕهِمْ ؕ كَبُرَتْ كَلِمَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ اَفْوَاهِهِمْ ؕ اِنْ يَّقُوْلُوْنَ اِلَّا كَذِبًا ۝5[3]

The word "knowledge" here means "conclusive proof." The implication is that those who ascribe children to God and make them His associates have fabricated all this. Neither has God ever ratified this nor do these foolish people have any proof of it. They are indulging in this foolishness while blindly following their forefathers. It was mere ignorance on their part and they too are following them in their footsteps. It is a false accusation on God and a matter of grave disrespect to Him. If they do not desist from this contemptuous attitude, they will soon meet their fate.

فَلَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَّفْسَكَ عَلٰٓى اٰثَارِهِمْ اِنْ لَّمْ يُؤْمِنُوْا بِهٰذَا الْحَدِيْثِ اَسَفًا ۝6[4]

This is an assurance sounded to the Prophet (sws) in a very fond and affectionate way. It is evident from this how conscientous the Prophet (sws) was in his obligations. He was expending every bit of his energy in his preaching endeavour and still thinking that if these people were not accepting faith, it was because he may be lacking in his effort. It was because of this thought that both his hard work and agony would continuously be increasing. So the Almighty checked him on this attitude in a very affectionate way: he should not go overboard in discharging his duty. If these ungrateful and wretched people are not professing faith in this Book, he should not think that it is because they are having any difficult in understanding it or there is something amiss in his efforts. The real reason is something else.

اِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْاَرْضِ زِيْنَةً لَّهَا لِنَبْلُوَهُمْ اَيُّهُمْ اَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۝7[5]

This verse mentions the real reason for their aversion and denial. This world is a place of trial and test. In it, God is testing who using his intellect and brains seeks the Hereafter, and who following his desires ends up seeking this world. For the purpose of the test, God has adorned the face of this earth with make-up that is deceptively pleasing to the eye. There is great lure and attraction in wealth and children, in orchards and gardens, in fields and crops, in cars and villas, in buildings and castles,

3. They do not have any knowledge of this matter: neither they, nor their forefathers. Very grave are the words which they are uttering from their mouths. It is mere lies that they are speaking.

4. So you may well take your life because of sorrow while venturing after them if they do not profess faith in this word.

5. Whatever is on the earth, We have made it its adornment so that We test people that who among them does good deeds.

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in positions of high social and political status of this world. All its pleasures are at hand and easy to attain while its pains are hidden. On the other hand, all the successes of the Hereafter are as yet concealed from the eyes, and those who seek them are immediately faced with a lot of hardships in this world. Indeed this is a severe trial. Not every slave to his passions can come through it. Only those will sail through it who are perspicacious enough not to be misled by these worldly lures which may attempt to deceive them in one guise or another and are never prepared to lose the favours of the Hereafter by getting caught in the lures and attractions of this world. As for those who have who have blinded their eyes of intellect and heart and have become slaves of their desires, they are not ready to lose the immediate gains to acquire the deferred gains of the Hereafter even though every speck of this universe bears witness to them.

وَاِنَّا لَجٰعِلُوْنَ مَا عَلَيْهَا صَعِيْدًا جُرُزًا ۝۸[6]

The word جُرُز refers to barren land. The implication is that the things of this world which these people are infatuated with are all transient. One day God will totally destroy them and make this land barren. This topic is also discussed in verses 46-48 ahead. There it shall insha'Allāh be explained further.

Section II: Verses (9-26)

The way the Quraysh were opposing the Qur'ān and the Prophet (sws) is stated in the previous verses. Another aspect of this opposition was that in order to harass and corner him, they would pose all sorts of questions before him that would be implanted in their minds by the People of the Book. The Quraysh would pose these questions to him and seek answers from him. Questions regard *rūḥ*, Dhū al-Qarnayn and some other ones which the Qur'ān has referred to were actually raised by the People of the Book. A similar question related to the cave-sleepers and was posed to the Prophet (sws) by the Quraysh. These irrelevant questions were obviously not meant to find out the real truth. They were only meant to tease and corner him. The purpose was that if the Prophet (sws) was unable to answer them, they would make this an excuse to oppose him and say that a person who claims to be a prophet of God has no answer to these questions. If the Prophet (sws) was able to answer them and the answer was against their beliefs, they thought that they would say that this person is saying something incorrect from his own self while the truth, on the contrary, is so and so.

The anecdote of the cave-dwellers has been mentioned as a result of a question posed by the Prophet's opponents, as is evident from the Qur'ān itself. It is stated in

6. And We shall ultimately destroy all the things on it making everything a barren field.

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verses 22-24 ahead that the Qur'ān has referred to this incident while answering a question. The advice of the Qur'ān about such questions, as will become evident later, is that they should be ignored. However, if some question is beneficial or its answer can be beneficial for education, the Qur'ān has answered it to the extent it can be useful. Since the life of the cave-dwellers could have provided useful guidance to the Prophet (sws) and his companions in the testing times they were passing through in their preaching because they too were passing through the same phases as the cave-dwellers had encountered, the Almighty narrated to them that part of their anecdote that was true. In this way, not only the question raised was answered, the Prophet (sws) was also instructed in perseverance and patience through a past anecdote and a very important chapter in the history of the seekers of the truth was cleansed from all sorts of wrong details and revived in its original form.

Who were the cave-dwellers, when did they inhabit the earth and whose ancestors were they are questions that cannot be answered with certainty. In this regard, what can be known with certainty is what the Qur'ān has narrated about them. The rest are all folk-tales about them. After narrating the correct version of their history that could have provided useful guidance, the Qur'ān has stopped us from further inquiry into them, as will become evident later. Thus I would not like to go after finding out something from which the Qur'ān has stopped us. However, it does become evident from concomitant indications that the cave-dwellers were not from the ancestors of the Quraysh or the Jews; they were from the ancestors of the Christians. They have historical anecdotes among them which are similar to the account of the cave-dwellers. In my opinion, they belonged to the initial period of the Christians when they were persecuted by the Romans and they responded in a manner that inscribed a new tale of the truth in the annals of history that is referred to by the Qur'ān. They fearlessly invited people to monotheism and warned them of the accountability in the hereafter. The consequence was that everyone became their enemy and the danger of they being stoned to death looked imminent. When matters reached this extent, they took refuge in a cave and the Almighty provided for them the means and resources – which only He could provide – to protect them. When people came to know of their circumstances and the grand way in which they were helped by God, memorials were constructed for them and every group started to claim connection with them. In this way, their anecdote was preserved as a sacred tradition in Christian history. Gradually, this tradition became confined to some miraculous feats and baseless details about them. Their real achievement was lost to posterity. Christians did indulge in polemical debates about their number and whether their dog was the fourth besides them or the fifth, but no one knew what their real message was and the extent of sacrifices they gave. This mention survived probably as long as some adherents of real Christianity survived. Later when Saint Paul distorted the teachings of Jesus (sws), the true history of the ancestors of Christians too was obliterated. It seems that some narratives about them circulated among the Arab Christians but were distorted. It was at the instigation

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of these Christians that this question was posed to the Prophet (sws). The Qur'ān answered it because he could receive great assurance and strength in the adverse circumstances he and his companions were passing through, as is pointed out earlier. Just as the cave-dwellers were oppressed and persecuted by their rivals, the Prophet (sws) and his companions too had to face tremendous trials at the hands of the Quraysh. Just as the cave-dwellers had to seek refuge in a cave, the Prophet (sws) and his companions too would soon be faced with the ordeals of migration to Abyssinia, refuge in the Thawr-cave and then migration of Madīnah.

Readers may now proceed to study these verses in the light of this background.

Text and Translation

اَمۡ حَسِبۡتَ اَنَّ اَصۡحٰبَ الۡكَهۡفِ وَ الرَّقِيۡمِ كَانُوۡا مِنۡ اٰيٰتِنَا عَجَبًا ﴿۹﴾ اِذۡ اَوَى الۡفِتۡيَةُ اِلَى الۡكَهۡفِ فَقَالُوۡا رَبَّنَاۤ
اٰتِنَا مِنۡ لَّدُنۡكَ رَحۡمَةً وَّ هَيِّئۡ لَنَا مِنۡ اَمۡرِنَا رَشَدًا ﴿۱۰﴾ فَضَرَبۡنَا عَلٰۤى اٰذَانِهِمۡ فِى الۡكَهۡفِ سِنِيۡنَ عَدَدًا ﴿۱۱﴾ ثُمَّ
بَعَثۡنٰهُمۡ لِنَعۡلَمَ اَىُّ الۡحِزۡبَيۡنِ اَحۡصٰى لِمَا لَبِثُوۡۤا اَمَدًا ﴿۱۲﴾ نَحۡنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيۡكَ نَبَاَهُمۡ بِالۡحَقِّ ؕ اِنَّهُمۡ فِتۡيَةٌ اٰمَنُوۡا
بِرَبِّهِمۡ وَ زِدۡنٰهُمۡ هُدًى ﴿۱۳﴾ وَّ رَبَطۡنَا عَلٰى قُلُوۡبِهِمۡ اِذۡ قَامُوۡا فَقَالُوۡا رَبُّنَا رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الۡاَرۡضِ لَنۡ نَّدۡعُوَاۡ مِنۡ
دُوۡنِهٖۤ اِلٰهًا لَّقَدۡ قُلۡنَاۤ اِذًا شَطَطًا ﴿۱۴﴾ هٰٓؤُلَاۤءِ قَوۡمُنَا اتَّخَذُوۡا مِنۡ دُوۡنِهٖۤ اٰلِهَةً ؕ لَوۡلَا يَاۡتُوۡنَ عَلَيۡهِمۡ بِسُلۡطٰنٍۢ بَيِّنٍ ؕ
فَمَنۡ اَظۡلَمُ مِمَّنِ افۡتَرٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا ﴿۱۵﴾ وَ اِذِ اعۡتَزَلۡتُمُوۡهُمۡ وَمَا يَعۡبُدُوۡنَ اِلَّا اللّٰهَ فَاۡوٗۤا اِلَى الۡكَهۡفِ يَنۡشُرۡ لَكُمۡ
رَبُّكُمۡ مِّنۡ رَّحۡمَتِهٖ وَيُهَيِّئۡ لَكُمۡ مِّنۡ اَمۡرِكُمۡ مِّرۡفَقًا ﴿۱۶﴾ وَتَرَى الشَّمۡسَ اِذَا طَلَعَتۡ تَّزٰوَرُ عَنۡ كَهۡفِهِمۡ ذَاتَ الۡيَمِيۡنِ
وَاِذَا غَرَبَتۡ تَّقۡرِضُهُمۡ ذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ وَهُمۡ فِىۡ فَجۡوَةٍ مِّنۡهُ ؕ ذٰلِكَ مِنۡ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ ؕ مَنۡ يَّهۡدِ اللّٰهُ فَهُوَ الۡمُهۡتَدِ ۚ وَمَنۡ
يُّضۡلِلۡ فَلَنۡ تَجِدَ لَهٗ وَلِيًّا مُّرۡشِدًا ﴿۱۷﴾ وَتَحۡسَبُهُمۡ اَيۡقَاظًا وَّهُمۡ رُقُوۡدٌ ۟ وَّنُقَلِّبُهُمۡ ذَاتَ الۡيَمِيۡنِ وَذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ
۟ وَكَلۡبُهُمۡ بَاسِطٌ ذِرَاعَيۡهِ بِالۡوَصِيۡدِ ؕ لَوِ اطَّلَعۡتَ عَلَيۡهِمۡ لَوَلَّيۡتَ مِنۡهُمۡ فِرَارًا وَّ لَمُلِئۡتَ مِنۡهُمۡ رُعۡبًا ﴿۱۸﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ
بَعَثۡنٰهُمۡ لِيَتَسَآءَلُوۡا بَيۡنَهُمۡ ؕ قَالَ قَآئِلٌ مِّنۡهُمۡ كَمۡ لَبِثۡتُمۡ ؕ قَالُوۡا لَبِثۡنَا يَوۡمًا اَوۡ بَعۡضَ يَوۡمٍ ؕ قَالُوۡا رَبُّكُمۡ اَعۡلَمُ بِمَا
لَبِثۡتُمۡ ؕ فَابۡعَثُوۡۤا اَحَدَكُمۡ بِوَرِقِكُمۡ هٰذِهٖۤ اِلَى الۡمَدِيۡنَةِ فَلۡيَنۡظُرۡ اَيُّهَاۤ اَزۡكٰى طَعَامًا فَلۡيَاۡتِكُمۡ بِرِزۡقٍ مِّنۡهُ وَ
لۡيَتَلَطَّفۡ وَلَا يُشۡعِرَنَّ بِكُمۡ اَحَدًا ﴿۱۹﴾ اِنَّهُمۡ اِنۡ يَّظۡهَرُوۡا عَلَيۡكُمۡ يَرۡجُمُوۡكُمۡ اَوۡ يُعِيۡدُوۡكُمۡ فِىۡ مِلَّتِهِمۡ وَلَنۡ تُفۡلِحُوۡۤا
اِذًا اَبَدًا ﴿۲۰﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ اَعۡثَرۡنَا عَلَيۡهِمۡ لِيَعۡلَمُوۡۤا اَنَّ وَعۡدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ وَّ اَنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَا رَيۡبَ فِيۡهَا ۚ اِذۡ يَتَنَازَعُوۡنَ
بَيۡنَهُمۡ اَمۡرَهُمۡ فَقَالُوا ابۡنُوۡا عَلَيۡهِمۡ بُنۡيَانًا ؕ رَبُّهُمۡ اَعۡلَمُ بِهِمۡ ؕ قَالَ الَّذِيۡنَ غَلَبُوۡا عَلٰۤى اَمۡرِهِمۡ لَنَتَّخِذَنَّ عَلَيۡهِمۡ

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مَّسْجِدًا ﴿٢١﴾ سَيَقُوْلُوْنَ ثَلٰثَةٌ رَّابِعُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ ۚ وَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ خَمْسَةٌ سَادِسُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ رَجْمًۢا بِالْغَيْبِ ۚ وَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ
سَبْعَةٌ وَّ ثَامِنُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ ؕ قُلْ رَّبِّيْۤ اَعْلَمُ بِعِدَّتِهِمْ مَّا يَعْلَمُهُمْ اِلَّا قَلِيْلٌ ۬ فَلَا تُمَارِ فِيْهِمْ اِلَّا مِرَآءً ظَاهِرًا ۪ وَّ لَا
تَسْتَفْتِ فِيْهِمْ مِّنْهُمْ اَحَدًا ﴿٢٢﴾ وَ لَا تَقُوْلَنَّ لِشَايْءٍ اِنِّيْ فَاعِلٌ ذٰلِكَ غَدًا ﴿٢٣﴾ اِلَّاۤ اَنْ يَّشَآءَ اللّٰهُ ۬ وَ اذْكُرْ رَّبَّكَ
اِذَا نَسِيْتَ وَ قُلْ عَسٰۤى اَنْ يَّهْدِيَنِ رَبِّيْ لِاَقْرَبَ مِنْ هٰذَا رَشَدًا ﴿٢٤﴾ وَ لَبِثُوْا فِيْ كَهْفِهِمْ ثَلٰثَ مِائَةٍ سِنِيْنَ وَ
ازْدَادُوْا تِسْعًا ﴿٢٥﴾ قُلِ اللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثُوْا ۚ لَهٗ غَيْبُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ ؕ اَبْصِرْ بِهٖ وَ اَسْمِعْ ؕ مَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِهٖ
مِنْ وَّلِيٍّ ۬ وَّ لَا يُشْرِكُ فِيْ حُكْمِهٖۤ اَحَدًا ﴿٢٦﴾

Did you regard the dwellers of the cave and *raqīm* as a very strange sign of Ours. At the time when some youngsters took refuge in the cave and prayed: "Our Lord! Bless us with mercy from Yourself and guide us in this matter of Ours." So, We lulled them to sleep for many years in the cave. Then We woke them up to see which of the two groups correctly counts the period of their stay. (9-12)

We relate to you their anecdote in truth. They were a few youngsters who professed faith in their Lord and We increased them in their guidance and strengthened their hearts at that time when they rose and declared: "Our Lord is He Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. We shall never call upon anyone except Him as God. If we do this, we would say what is totally far from the truth. These are the people of our nation who have made some others besides Him as deities. Why do they not present clear evidence in their favour? Then who will be more unjust than those who invent falsehood against God?" (13-15)

And now that you have separated yourselves from them and from their deities who they worship besides God, go and seek refuge in the cave. Your God shall spread His mercy for you and shall provide you in this phase of yours whatever you need. (16)

And You see the sun when it rises, it declines from the right of their cave and when it sets, it moves away to the left side and they lie in its open space. This is from among the signs of God. He who is guided by God, is the one guided and he whom God leads astray, you will not be able to find for him any helper and guide. (17)

And you would have thought that they are awake even though they were asleep. And We also continued to turn them on their right and left, and their dog sat at the cave entrance with hands outstretched. Had you caught their glimpse, you would have turned and fled and you would have been awe-struck by them. (18)

And in this way, We woke them that they may mutually question one another. An asker from them asked: "How much time would you have stayed here?" They replied: "We must have stayed for a day or even less." They said: "Only your Lord knows best the period you stayed. So, send anyone among you to the city with this currency of yours; then he should fully scrutinize in which part of the city pure food is found and

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should bring from it some edibles for you. And he should go there in secrecy and not let anyone know about you. If they get to know about you, they will stone you to death or will force you back to their religion and then you will never succeed." (19-20)

And in a similar way, We informed people about them so that they know that the promise of God is true and there is no doubt in the advent of the Hereafter. Think also of the time when people were disputing among themselves about them. So, they said: "Build a monument on their cave. Their Lord knows them better." Those who held the dominant opinion in their matter, said: "We will build a mosque on their cave." (21)

Now they will say: "They were three and the fourth was their dog," and will say: "They were five and the sixth was their dog." Mere conjecture! and will say: "They were seven and the eighth was their dog." Say: Only my Lord knows better their number. Few people know them. And do not debate about them except if you have to say something to divert them and do not ask about them from any of them – and do not say about any matter: "I shall do it tomorrow." Except if God intends. And when you forget, remember your Lord and say: Hopefully, my Lord will guide me to what is correct in even lesser time than this. (22-24)

And they remained in their cave for three hundred years and a further nine as well. Say: only God knows full well the time of their stay. It is He alone Who has knowledge of the Unseen of the heavens and the earth. How amazing is He in seeing and hearing! No one except Him is their guardian, and He also does not allow anyone share His authority. (25-26)

Explanation

اَمۡ حَسِبۡتَ اَنَّ اَصۡحٰبَ الۡكَهۡفِ وَالرَّقِيۡمِ ۙ كَانُوۡا مِنۡ اٰيٰتِنَا عَجَبًا ۝[7]

It is not necessary that the word حَسِبۡتَ be addressed to the Prophet (sws). The address can be general like أَلَمۡ تَرَ. Such an address is directed to every individual of a group and has more emphasis in it than a plural address. In fact, in this very section (see verses 17 and 18), there are instances in which the addressed entity is singular but is not directed at the Prophet (sws). It is directed to every individual of the group.

Also worthy of consideration here is the fact that what is the purpose of addressing the Prophet (sws) in this verse? In the first place, he was not even aware of the anecdote of the cave-dwellers and it was through this revelation that he came to know about them. And if it is supposed that he even had some information about them, what was the occasion of showing wonder, as the verse says. Stranger tales had already been recited to him about the previous prophets. In my opinion, this question is addressed to the people who had raised this issue and their purpose was to decrease the worth of the Prophet (sws) and his companions in the eyes of people. They wanted to show to people that when such saintly people as the cave-dwellers had lived in their

7. Did you regard the dwellers of the cave and *raqīm* as a very strange sign of Ours.

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past for whom such divine signs of splendour manifested themselves, how could they be in need of any further guidance and that too from a prophet in whom they could observe no such splendour? It may be noted that in those times, the Jews and the Christians used to declare openly that he who wanted to be guided should adopt their religion; this new religion has no foundation – even polytheism was better than it. Thus while keeping this mentality of the questioners in consideration, the Qur'ān has begun the answer by stating that if they thought that the incident of the cave-dwellers was very strange, then they were mistaken. This was just one sign among numerous other signs of God. Similar signs have manifested themselves earlier and will manifest in future too for those whom God wills. These signs are under His control and not the monopoly of a particular group.

This is my opinion regarding the address found in the verse. However, if someone regards the verse to address the Prophet (sws), then in that case, it would mean that if he according to famous traditions regard this incident to be a strange one, then this is not so. Such signs have appeared in the past and will appear in the future too. These words are in fact glad tidings for the Prophet (sws) and his companions: just as God has been protecting the earlier adherents of his religion through His signs of might and power, He will do so for them too.

As for the question that why are these people called as *aṣḥāb al-kahf wa aṣḥāb al-raqīm*, the answer to this question is that they were known by this title among the People of the Book of Arabia. Their ascription to *al-kahf* obviously is because they took refuge in the cave. As for *al-raqīm*, then the correct opinion about this is the one reported by 'Ikramah from 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās (rta) that in the opinion of Ka'b (rta), it was the name of a city from which these youngsters had come out and taken refuge in the cave. It was also called the valley of *raqīm*. As for why a place is given a specific name, it is not necessary to find it out and it is difficult too. When non-Arabic names are Arabicised, they change so much that finding out their original names is virtually impossible and this does not have any utility for the purpose of eduction either. If this name had been kept by the Qur'ān, then research into its meanings and origins does have a special significance. However, as just pointed out, this name has been adopted by the People of the Book, in particular the Christians, of Arabia. The Qur'ān has only taken it from them. Some researchers of current times think that this is the name of the city which was famous by the name of Petra and the Arabs called it Batrā.

اِذۡ اَوَی الۡفِتۡیَۃُ اِلَی الۡکَہۡفِ فَقَالُوۡا رَبَّنَاۤ اٰتِنَا مِنۡ لَّدُنۡکَ رَحۡمَۃً وَّ ہَیِّئۡ لَنَا مِنۡ اَمۡرِنَا رَشَدًا ﴿۱۰﴾[8]

The verb رَشَدَ means that he was guided and bestowed with steadfastness. The expression رشد أمره would mean that he was guided in his matter and the verse وَّ ہَیِّئۡ لَنَا مِنۡ

8. At the time when some youngsters took refuge in the cave and prayed: "Our Lord! Bless us with mercy from Yourself and guide us in this matter of Ours."

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اَمۡرِنَا رَشَدًا would mean: Lord! Guide us and make us persevere in this path that we have adopted."

This is the supplication which these youngsters made when they intended to take refuge in the cave. It is evident from the words of the verse that these were young people. When the sense of honour for the truth once awakens in them, they do not care for any expediency or danger. However, these people not only had the exuberance of youth in them, they also had the light of wisdom blessed to them by God. For this reason, they supplicated before God for guidance and perseverance at this precarious instant, and this is precisely what was apt for them.

It may be kept in mind that this verse and the next two present a summary of the whole anecdote. They briefly describe it to the reader. Thereafter, the whole anecdote is presented. The utility of this style of briefly describing something before details are given is that it highlights the real purpose and secondary details do not let it disappear from the mind of the reader. This style is adopted at many instances in the Qur'ān in the anecdotes mentioned in it.

فَضَرَبۡنَا عَلٰٓى اٰذَانِهِمۡ فِى الۡكَهۡفِ سِنِيۡنَ عَدَدًا ﴿۱۱﴾[9]

The literal meaning of the expression ضرب علی الآذان is to put a seal on the ears or to pat someone on the ears. From here, this idiom began to be used to mean to stop someone from listening or affectionately lulling someone to sleep. This is because when a child is put to sleep his ears are patted.

After these youngsters took refuge in the cave, they were peacefully put to sleep for many years. These words of putting them to sleep are used as an eloquent metaphor and connote putting someone to sleep in a very loving and caring manner.

ثُمَّ بَعَثۡنٰهُمۡ لِنَعۡلَمَ اَىُّ الۡحِزۡبَيۡنِ اَحۡصٰى لِمَا لَبِثُوۡٓا اَمَدًا ﴿۱۲﴾[10]

The letter ل word on لِنَعۡلَمَ is meant to express the consequence and the verb نَعۡلَمَ means to see and evaluate something. The verse means that God woke them up from their long sleep so that this matter reaches the consquence that they become divided into two groups and argue with each other about the period they had slept. Different speculations would be made and it would ultimately become evident that none of them was true. It would further become evident to them that the life of Barzakh would be no different. No one would able to have a true estimate of its extent. Every person would think that he had just slept a short while ago. In verse 19 ahead, this topic is discussed in more detail and all its hidden aspects will become evident.

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9. So, We lulled them to sleep for many years in the cave.

10. Then We woke them up to see which of the two groups correctly counts the period of their stay.

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نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ نَبَاَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ ؕ اِنَّهُمْ فِتْيَةٌ اٰمَنُوْا بِرَبِّهِمْ وَزِدْنٰهُمْ هُدًى ﴿۱۳﴾[11]

From here onwards, their anecdote is narrated in detail. It is qualified by the word بِالْحَقِّ. It means that the Qur'ān has presented its true details while ignoring the famous ones that carry no truth. Secondly, the purpose of the Qur'ān is not to narrate something in secrecy as others do; the purpose is to inform people of the wisdom concealed in this anecdote.

How actually this guidance manifested in their increase in guidance is mentioned in the next verse. The word فِتْيَةٌ here should be kept in mind. By pointing out that these individuals belonged to the younger generation, the Qur'ān has directed the attention of the youngsters of the time of Prophet Muḥammad (sws) to learn a lesson from them. They should follow the right path disregarding the enmity of their nation. God will be their helper.

وَّرَبَطْنَا عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ اِذْ قَامُوْا فَقَالُوْا رَبُّنَا رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ لَنْ نَّدْعُوَاْ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖۤ اِلٰهًا لَّقَدْ قُلْنَاۤ اِذًا شَطَطًا ﴿۱۴﴾[12]

The expression ربط اللہ علی قلبہ would mean "God strengthened his heart."

The word شط means "to draw away," and شَطَطَ means "to draw away from the truth." The implication is that even though the questions were very tough and the task of inviting people to the truth was a very difficult one, the Almighty blessed the faith of these youngsters. The consequence was that they did not contend themselves with mere possession of faith and withdrew to their homes; on the contrary, they embarked upon the mission of preaching monotheism. At this, the Almighty in accordance with His established practice strengthened their hearts and they openly declared among their people that their Lord is only the One Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth and that they are not prepared to accept anyone else as their Lord. If they do this, it would be something baseless and far from the truth.

هٰٓؤُلَآءِ قَوْمُنَا اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖۤ اٰلِهَةً ؕ لَوْلَا يَاْتُوْنَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِسُلْطٰنٍۢ بَيِّنٍ ؕ فَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا ﴿۱۵﴾[13]

The word قَوْم refer to the people of Raqīm. The verse states the challenge thrown by these youngsters to their nation. Those who have a flair for Arabic know that the way the word هٰٓؤُلَآءِ is used in the verse and the way the indirect address is employed, they

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11. We relate to you their anecdote in truth. They were a few youngsters who professed faith in their Lord and We increased them in their guidance.

12. And strengthened their hearts at that time when they rose and declared: "Our Lord is He Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. We shall never call upon anyone except Him as God. If we do this, we would say what is totally far from the truth.

13. These are the people of our nation who have made some others besides Him as deities. Why do they not present clear evidence in their favour? Then who will be more unjust than those who invent falsehood against God?"

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express disgust from these youngsters for the beliefs of their nation. The implication is that these people openly proclaimed that why do the foolish elements of their nation who have set up other deities besides God bring any evidence in their favour. Who can be more unjust than a person who invents falsehood against God?

وَاِذِ اعْتَزَلْتُمُوْهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُوْنَ اِلَّا اللّٰهَ فَاْوٗٓا اِلَى الْكَهْفِ يَنْشُرْ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِّنْ رَّحْمَتِهٖ وَيُهَيِّئْ لَكُمْ مِّنْ اَمْرِكُمْ مِّرْفَقًا ﴿١٦﴾[14]

The word مِّرْفَق refers to something useful for a person.

This verse depicts glad tidings for them from the Almighty. Concomitant indications show that the following part of the discourse is suppressed here: ultimately, the conflict between them and their nation reached an extent that the danger of stoning them to death looked imminent, as is evident from verse 20 that time. So, they decided to seek refuge in a cave which they had already chosen. At that time, the Almighty divinely inspired these glad tidings to them that now that they have left their nation and its idols for the His sake, they should seek refuge in the cave they have selected. Their Lord will embrace them with His mercy and provide them with whatever they need. He only wants His servants to show resolve and tread the path that leads to Him. When such individuals take this initiative, God Himself provides the means and resources for them to reach their destination. It is stated thus in verses 2-3 of Sūrah al-Ṭalāq: وَّيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَمَنْ يَّتَّقِ اللّٰهَ يَجْعَلْ لَّهٗ مَخْرَجًا[15]

It is possible that a question arise in the minds of people that were these people divinely appointed of God so that they were sent divine revelation. The answer to this question is that this is a particular type of divine revelation and is similar to the one sent to Moses' mother to place him in a box and set it afloat the sea.

Some *sufīs* have tried to derive from this verse the blessing and superiority of isolating one's self from the world. However, I do not regard this to be correct. These people took refuge in the cave at the time when they had reached the phase of risking their lives to reform their society and were in danger of being stoned to death by its people. The Prophet (sws) too encountered a similar phase when he had to seek refuge in the cave of Thawr. These people had not adopted this life of isolation because of any inclination towards monasticism. They were forced to seek refuge to protect themselves from the enemies of the truth.

Our exegetes have generally not regarded this verse to imply glad tidings. They think that it actually constitutes a statement from the cave-dwellers – something said mutually among them. However, this is not correct. The absolute certainty with which this verse

14. And now that you have separated yourselves from them and from their deities who they worship besides God, go and seek refuge in the cave. Your God shall spread His mercy for you and shall provide you in this phase of yours whatever you need.

15. And they who fear God, God will find a way out for them and will provide for them from where they cannot even think.

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constitutes the promise of divine help cannot be stated by a humble individual. Such an individual can only give this statement in the form of a supplication or a yearning. Thus in verse 10, there is a reference of a supplication offered by these cave-dwellers.

وَ تَرَى الشَّمْسَ اِذَا طَلَعَتْ تَّزٰوَرُ عَنْ كَهْفِهِمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِيْنِ وَ اِذَا غَرَبَتْ تَّقْرِضُهُمْ ذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ وَ هُمْ فِيْ فَجْوَةٍ مِّنْهُ ؕ ذٰلِكَ مِنْ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ ؕ مَنْ يَّهْدِ اللّٰهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ ۚ وَ مَنْ يُّضْلِلْ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهٗ وَلِيًّا مُّرْشِدًا ﴿۱۷﴾[16]

The word تَزٰوَرُ is actually تَتَزَاوَرُ. Its meaning is to withdraw to one side.

The word قَرَضَ means to move away. Thus the idiom قرض المكان means "he moved away from his place or left his place."

فَجْوَةٍ refers to a gap between two things, a fissure or a corner place. From here it came to be used as the open space in a house.

In the previous verse, the Almighty had promised to provide the cave-dwellers with provisions they needed. It is evident from this verse that the opening of the cave was situated such that light and air easily reached inside it. However, heat of the sun could not enter it. Our exegetes have tried to determine the whereabouts of the cave and its opening; however, this is a needless exercise. Various possibilities can be supposed for this but nothing can be said with certainty. The correct view in this regard is that they are a sign from the signs of God. He has provided for His servants a cave where the requirements of sustenance were made available to them by Him. It seemed that if the sun passed by them, it too passed in a very respectful way without disrupting their peace.

The verse goes on to state that this is from among the great signs of God. As far as such signs are concerned, one after another great sign is present but only those are guided by these signs who are given the urge by God. Those who are deprived of this urge are helped by none.

وَ تَحْسَبُهُمْ اَيْقَاظًا وَّ هُمْ رُقُوْدٌ ۚ وَّ نُقَلِّبُهُمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِيْنِ وَ ذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ ۚ وَ كَلْبُهُمْ بَاسِطٌ ذِرَاعَيْهِ بِالْوَصِيْدِ ؕ لَوِ اطَّلَعْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَوَلَّيْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِرَارًا وَّ لَمُلِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ رُعْبًا ﴿۱۸﴾[17]

This verse states the arrangement of protection made by God: even though they were sleeping in a cave, such was their spectacle that it could have startled an

16. And You see the sun when it rises, it declines from the right of their cave and when it sets, it moves away to the left side and they lie in its open space. This is from among the signs of God. He who is guided by God, is the one guided and he whom God leads astray, you will not be able to find for him any helper and guide.

17. And you would have thought that they are awake even though they were asleep. And We also continued to turn them on their right and left, and their dog sat at the cave entrance with hands outstretched. Had you caught their glimpse, you would have turned and fled and you would have been awe-struck by them.

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onlooker. Seeing them asleep he would not have dared harm them; he would have thought they are aware of their surroundings and well-protected. Such was their position while sleeping that a passerby would have thought that they were just resting and not in deep sleep.

They would be turned on their sides by God because this was necessary for their physical health and also because it would have made their bodies stiff if they lay on one side. They had slept for a very long period. Thus just as an affectionate mother keeps turning her child on his sides in the cradle, providence did the same for them too.

A protective measure taken to safeguard them was that their faithful dog sat at the opening of the cave with outstretched arms. Obviously, the dog too must have slept during this period but his sleeping position was not the same as that of how dogs normally sleep. He slept in a way that sentinel dogs do. This arrangement was made so that no one including wild animals could dare enter the cave.

The last part of the verse expresses how an onlooker would be bewildered at this spectacle and dash away from it. He would wonder who these are these people sleeping in a cave right in the middle of mountains. Should he regard them as good people or evil ones, robbers or monks, heavenly or earthly, angels or the jinn. Whatever be the case, he would definitely be overcome with a certain amount of fear. This element of fear was created by providence to protect them. The rulers of this world sleep in castles encircled by thorny wires and armed sentinels guard them – and still they are not safe. The servants of God sleep in caves and forests and even birds cannot are enter them.

وَكَذٰلِكَ بَعَثْنٰهُمْ لِيَتَسَآءَلُوْا بَيْنَهُمْ ؕ قَالَ قَآئِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ ؕ قَالُوْا لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا اَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ ؕ قَالُوْا رَبُّكُمْ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثْتُمْ ؕ فَابْعَثُوْۤا اَحَدَكُمْ بِوَرِقِكُمْ هٰذِهٖۤ اِلَى الْمَدِيْنَةِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ اَيُّهَاۤ اَزْكٰى طَعَامًا فَلْيَاْتِكُمْ بِرِزْقٍ مِّنْهُ وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ وَلَا يُشْعِرَنَّ بِكُمْ اَحَدًا ﴿۱۹﴾[18]

The word وَكَذٰلِكَ refers to the fact that just as the Almighty showed His magnificent sign of help mentioned earlier, in the same way He awoke them so that they question each other about their period of sleep and ultimately acknowledge that they were absolutely unable to do it. Only God had its knowledge.

The mutual questions and answers mentioned by the verse are the ones which are rather briefly referred to in verse 13 earlier. Here, details are given which show that these questions and answers took place between these very people. Here too the ل on لِيَتَسَآءَلُوْا is for consequence: God wanted that their resurrection from sleep result in the

18. And in this way, We woke them that they may mutually question one another. An asker from them asked: "How much time would you have stayed here?" They replied: "We must have stayed for a day or even less." They said: "Only your Lord knows best the period you stayed. So, send anyone among you to the city with this currency of yours; then he should fully scrutinize in which part of the city pure food is found and should bring from it some edibles for you. And he should go there in secrecy and not let anyone know about you.

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fact that they investigate the extent of time they slept and it ultimately become evident that were not able to do so and what further become evident to them was that the life of *barzakh* after death would be quite similar. When people would rise on the Day of Judgement, they would think that they had been in their state of sleep for a very short while.

In the expression اَيُّهَآ اَزْكٰى طَعَامًا, the word اَيُّهَا implies أی أطراف المدينة or أی نواحی المدينة and اَزْكٰى refers to pure food. These youngsters had taken refuge in the cave when their nation did not care whether to eat *ḥalāl* or forbidden food. This was because of the dominance of the creed of polytheism and disbelief. For this reason, they stressed on the person who was sent to fetch food to specially investigate and only bring back food that was *ḥalāl*. It may well have been that some People of the Book were living in Raqīm. For this reason, it was expected that they would be sensitive to the nature of food consumed. However, this investigation could expose the youngsters as well. So they stressed upon their companion to be very careful. The word تلطف means to accomlish a task in a very circumspect, clever and apprehensive way.

People have generally translated the word وَرِق as "coin" while I have translated it as "currency" because this وَرِق actually means silver and it can refer to coins in itself too. Thus I have adopted a word that can be used for both coins and other forms of money.

اِنَّهُمْ اِنْ يَّظْهَرُوْا عَلَيْكُمْ يَرْجُمُوْكُمْ اَوْ يُعِيْدُوْكُمْ فِيْ مِلَّتِهِمْ وَلَنْ تُفْلِحُوْٓا اِذًا اَبَدًا ﴿۲۰﴾[19]

This verse expresses the apprehension because of which their messenger was asked to go in secrecy and with care. At the time when these people took refuge in the cave, the righteous were being persecuted to the ultimate extent and it was feared that these youngsters would be stoned to death.

وَكَذٰلِكَ اَعْثَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ وَّاَنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهَا ۚ اِذْ يَتَنَازَعُوْنَ بَيْنَهُمْ اَمْرَهُمْ فَقَالُوا ابْنُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ بُنْيَانًا ۗ رَبُّهُمْ اَعْلَمُ بِهِمْ ۗ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ غَلَبُوْا عَلٰٓى اَمْرِهِمْ لَنَتَّخِذَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ مَّسْجِدًا ﴿۲۱﴾[20]

This كَذٰلِكَ is co-ordinated to the one in verse 19. The implication being that just as God showed His majesty mentioned there, He also showed His majesty by informing people about them. It has not been mentioned here how people became aware of these youngsters. It is possible that the person who had gone to the market to fetch food became a means of this information and some keen-eyed people saw him and began

19. "If they get to know about you, they will stone you to death or will force you back to their religion and then you will never succeed."

20. And in a similar way, We informed people about them so that they know that the promise of God is true and there is no doubt in the advent of the Hereafter. Think also of the time when people were disputing among themselves about them. So, they said: "Build a monument on their cave. Their Lord knows them better." Those who held the dominant opinion in their matter, said: "We will build a mosque on their cave."

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investigating about his origins. Gradually they were able to know them. After deliberation, it becomes evident that when these companions of the cave had the inkling that their news had reached outside, they became stationed in the cave. In this state, God gave them death and it was after their passing away that people got to fully know about them.

The greatest doubt the disbelievers had about the Day of Judgement was that they regarded being raised to life again after death to be improbable. The incident of the cave-dwellers presented a fresh evidence against this doubt. It is evident from concomitant indications that just as the Almighty guided people to their cave, He also informed them about how they spent their lives in the cave. Though this verse does not specify, yet it is evident that people were aware of this and it was in fact because of this thing that their lives became a strange miracle in the eyes of people and they became a fountainhead of respect for them after their passing away. It may well be that when people tried to investigate the origins of these cave-dwellers, this secret was revealed at that time and later it became common knowledge and the whole account was trasmitted to later generations in a perpetually concurrent way.

Now the Qur'ān has referred to the complete change in circumstances that ensued after their death. There was a time when fearing being stoned to death they had taken refuge in a cave and now people were disputing with one another to ascribe themselves to the cave-dwellers. Obviousy, this dispute must have taken place between different groups and families and must have happened because each group wanted the cave-dwellers to be ascribed to it. This is how the truthful have always been treated by the people of this world. During their lifetimes, they are persecuted but after their demise they are worshipped as idols. The cave-dwellers too were treated similarly as different groups vied with one another to ascribe themselves to them. One of the groups was of the opinion that their religious beliefs be consigned to God and a memorial buidling be constructed on their cave. The other group which was in majority said that they will make a mosque to commemorate their feat. The latter group prevailed. This shows the change in circumstances that arose after the sacrifces of these cave-dwellers: the people who were in majority in the country were the ones who were monotheists. The other group which though had not undergone this transformation to such an extent became tolernat enough to desire a monumunt being built in memory of the cave-dwellers.

There is a governing noun (*muḍāf*) suppressed in the verse رَبُّهُمْ اَعْلَمُ بِهِمْ ie. ربهم أعلم بدينهم. Similarly, in عَلَيْهِمْ مَّسْجِدًا also, there a governing noun is suppressed ie. على كهفهم. By calling the memorial constucted by them as a mosque, the Qur'ān has made it evident that these people believed in one God. Deviation crept up in their beliefs when they took to polytheistic beliefs. Thus in verse 22 of Sūrah al-Ḥajj the Qur'ān has called the synagouges and churches of the Jews and Christians as mosques.

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سَيَقُوْلُوْنَ ثَلٰثَةٌ رَّابِعُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ ۚ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ خَمْسَةٌ سَادِسُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ رَجْمًۢا بِالْغَيْبِ ۚ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ سَبْعَةٌ وَّثَامِنُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ ۭ قُلْ رَّبِّيْٓ اَعْلَمُ بِعِدَّتِهِمْ مَّا يَعْلَمُهُمْ اِلَّا قَلِيْلٌ ۬ فَلَا تُمَارِ فِيْهِمْ اِلَّا مِرَاۗءً ظَاهِرًا ۠ وَّلَا تَسْتَفْتِ فِيْهِمْ مِّنْهُمْ اَحَدًا ﴿۲۲﴾[21]

This is a parenthetical sentence addresed to the Prophet (sws).

The word مبارات means "debate and argument." The implication is that these people will engage in such questions about them before him and will try to involve the Prophet (sws) also in these debates. However, he should not the slightest incline himself to these and just pass by them by giving a brief answer. There is no need to ask any detail about the cave-dwellers when the Qur'ān has narrated their actual account.

It is explained in this verse that people who are inflicted with the ailment of polemical debate and argument have no interest in the truth itself. If they are answered on one front, they find another one to continue with their rant. Thus it is not befitting for any wise person to try to persuade such people. The best way is to leave them to themselves and instead of engaging in serious debate with them politely ignore them.

Some exegetes have regarded the last statement of the Qur'ān to be its verdict on the actual number of the cave-dwellers. The reason for this is that the first two opinions have been regarded as mere conjecture by the Qur'ān but it has not commented on the third. This opinion seems to be the correct one but my own opinion in this regard is the same as what the Qur'ān has said thus: "only my Lord knows better their number; few people know them."

وَلَا تَقُوْلَنَّ لِشَاْيْءٍ اِنِّىْ فَاعِلٌ ذٰلِكَ غَدًا ﴿۲۳﴾ اِلَّآ اَنْ يَّشَاۗءَ اللّٰهُ ۡ وَاذْكُرْ رَّبَّكَ اِذَا نَسِيْتَ وَقُلْ عَسٰٓى اَنْ يَّهْدِيَنِ رَبِّيْ لِاَقْرَبَ مِنْ هٰذَا رَشَدًا ﴿۲۴﴾[22]

Now in this regard, the Prophet (sws) is told that he should not promise people from his ownself that he will answer a question the next day. This directive probably was given to him when he was questioned regarding the cave-dwellers, he must have said that he would answer this question the next day. Such questions, as has been pointed out before, were posed to him as a test. Thus it was his natural desire that they be answered as soon as possible and he would make a commitment relying on future divine guidance. He had the intense wish in him to prove that his message was correct and hence he wanted to answer every question and objection of his opponents

21. Now they will say: "They were three and the fourth was their dog," and will say: "They were five and the sixth was their dog." Mere conjecture! and will say: "They were seven and the eighth was their dog." Say: Only my Lord knows better their number. Few people know them. And do not debate about them except if you have to say something to divert them and do not ask about them from any of them.

22. And do not say about any matter: "I shall do it tomorrow." Except if God intends. And when you forget, remember your Lord and say: Hopefully, my Lord will guide me to what is correct in even lesser time than this.

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forthwith so that they are left with no excuse. However, this matter has another aspect which was being ignored: at times God's wisdom entails that a question not be answered or answered later. For this reason, it is not appropriate for the Prophet (sws) to given an unconditional commitment in this regard. He should in fact make every promise conditional to God's will and if he sometimes forgets, he should remember God when he recalls his blemish. At the same time, he can tell those whom he had promised that it may well be that his Lord guides him to the right answer even before the promised time.

وَلَبِثُوْا فِيْ كَهْفِهِمْ ثَلٰثَ مِائَةٍ سِنِيْنَ وَازْدَادُوْا تِسْعًا ﴿٢٥﴾[23]

The parenthetical sentence that began with verse 22 ended on verse 24. This verse relates to the statements regarding the number of cave dwellers that were referred to just before verse 22. In other words, just as they will guess their number, they will also try to guess the number of years of their stay to be three hundrend and nine.

Generally people have taken this count to be from God. However, in my opinion, the Qur'ān has said nothing about their period of stay. In verse 11, the words سِنِيْنَ عَدَدًا occur. They do mean that they stayed in the cave for many years but any person having a flair for Arabic knows that they are absolutely inapt to imply three hundrend and nine. Moreover, the words "only God knows full well the time of their stay" of the very next verse also negate this. If God is informing us that they remained for three hundrend and nine years in the cave, then what is the purpose of saying only God knows their time of stay.

No one should be under the misconception that I am unique in this opinion. Several other exegetes also hold this view.

قُلِ اللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثُوْا ۚ لَهٗ غَيْبُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۭ اَبْصِرْ بِهٖ وَاَسْمِعْ ۭ مَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِهٖ مِنْ وَّلِيٍّ وَّلَا يُشْرِكُ فِيْ حُكْمِهٖٓ اَحَدًا ﴿٢٦﴾[24]

This is the answer the Prophet (sws) is asked to give to those who had raised this question: just as their guess regarding the number of cave-dwellers are mere conjecture, their guess about the time of their stay is also totally wrong. As indicated earlier, the words "only God knows full well the time of their stay" totally negate that the number three hundred and nine be interpreted to mean it was the year count given by God. Here this aspect of language should also be kept in mind that if this statement was God's verdict the sentence would not have begun by the particle of cooridation (and). The existence of this particle shows that this is among among the baseless conjectures cited earlier.

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23. And they remained in their cave for three hundred years and a further nine as well.

24. Say: only God knows full well the time of their stay. It is He alone Who has knowledge of the Unseen of the heavens and the earth. How amazing is He in seeing and hearing! No one except Him is their guardian, and He also does not allow anyone share His authority.

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The verse states that true knowledge of the secrets of the heavens and the earth is with God. Others know only the portion He has informed them of and the rest is all baseless. It does not have the status that on its basis human beings make fun of the knowledge given by God. The benefit of the knowledge they have gathered today from research and scientific inquiry cannot be denied. However, this cannot in any way parallel the knowledge provided by the Qur'ān.

The words اَبۡصِرۡ بِهٖ وَ اَسۡمِعۡ express exaggeration and extreme praise. There is nothing which is beyond the hearing and sight of God. The implication is that when the all-knowledgeable God has answered a question, who else can answer it better so that people need to turn to him.

Once the extent of God's knowledge was stated, it became a prelude for the negation of all deities and intercessors, as expressed in the last part of the verse. Thus when He is the most informed of all, how can these intercessors that people have made up for themselves be of any avail to them. God is perfect and complete and does not include others in His authority.

Section III: Verses (27-31)

The topic coming up is related to the topic of the *sūrah*. Readers may recall that in the beginning of the *sūrah* the Prophet (sws) had been stopped from worrying about those who had become slaves to worldly riches so much that they had forgotten God and the Hereafter and were not ready to hear the message of the Qur'ān. After that the episode of the cave-dwellers was mentioned as a result of a question. It became evident from it that God does not let the efforts of those who stand up for His cause go waste. In fact, He assures and encourages them and helps them from Himself on the hardships they face for His cause. Now in the succeeding verses, the introductory topic is once again taken up. The Prophet (sws) is addressed and told that he should recite out the Book that is being revealed to him and ignore the ever new demands of people as well as their evasion and arrogance.

The law of God regarding providing guidance to people cannot change. He should direct all his guidance to his poor and indigent companions while disregarding these rich and affluent people. He should tell the arrogant that they are free to choose belief or disbelief. He who disbelieves will see his fate for himself.

Readers may now proceed to study these verses in the light of this background.

Text and Translation

وَاتۡلُ مَاۤ اُوۡحِیَ اِلَیۡكَ مِنۡ كِتَابِ رَبِّكَ ؕ لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمٰتِهٖ ۚ وَلَنۡ تَجِدَ مِنۡ دُوۡنِهٖ مُلۡتَحَدًا ﴿۲۷﴾ وَاصۡبِرۡ نَفۡسَكَ

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مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدٰوةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَهٗ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنٰكَ عَنْهُمْ ۚ تُرِيْدُ زِيْنَةَ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۚ وَ لَا تُطِعْ مَنْ اَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهٗ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوٰىهُ وَكَانَ اَمْرُهٗ فُرُطًا ﴿۲۸﴾ وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّكُمْ ۟ فَمَنْ شَآءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَّمَنْ شَآءَ فَلْيَكْفُرْ ۙ اِنَّآ اَعْتَدْنَا لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ نَارًا ۙ اَحَاطَ بِهِمْ سُرَادِقُهَا ؕ وَاِنْ يَّسْتَغِيْثُوْا يُغَاثُوْا بِمَآءٍ كَالْمُهْلِ يَشْوِى الْوُجُوْهَ ؕ بِئْسَ الشَّرَابُ ؕ وَسَآءَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا ﴿۲۹﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ اِنَّا لَا نُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ مَنْ اَحْسَنَ عَمَلًا ﴿۳۰﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ جَنّٰتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِىْ مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْاَنْهٰرُ يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيْهَا مِنْ اَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَّيَلْبَسُوْنَ ثِيَابًا خُضْرًا مِّنْ سُنْدُسٍ وَّاِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُّتَّكِـِٕيْنَ فِيْهَا عَلَى الْاَرَآئِكِ ؕ نِعْمَ الثَّوَابُ ؕ وَحَسُنَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا ﴿۳۱﴾

And recite out the Book of your Lord that is being revealed to you. None can change the laws of God. And you can never find anyone except Him as a refuge. And attach yourself deeply to people who call God morning and evening to please Him. And your eyes must not turn away from them because of the allurements of worldly life, and do not pay heed to what they say who We have made heedless to Our remembrance and who are engrossed in their desires and whose matter has exceeded the limits. And say: This only is the truth from your Lord. So, whoever wants can profess belief and whoever wants can take to disbelief. We have prepared for the unjust a fire whose tents shall embrace them. And if they plead for water, their pleadings shall be answered by water which shall be like molten brass. It shall roast faces. What nasty water and what a nasty abode! (27-29)

Indeed those people who accepted faith and did righteous deeds, We shall not lay waste the reward of the deeds of those who are thorough in their deeds. For them shall be orchards of eternal residence which shall have rivers flowing beneath them. There they shall be made to wear gold bracelets and they shall adorn attires of *sundus* and *istabraq*, sitting on couches reclining. What a wonderful reward and what a wonderful abode! (30-31)

Explanation

وَاتْلُ مَآ اُوْحِىَ اِلَيْكَ مِنْ كِتَابِ رَبِّكَ ۚ لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمٰتِهٖ ۚ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ مُلْتَحَدًا ﴿۲۷﴾[25]

The Prophet (sws) is being impressed to recite the Book that is being revealed to him disregarding the demands of his opponents. He should neither get worried because of their questions nor be sorrowful on their stubbornness. God's law of guidance is a unchangeable. None can change this law. Only they will receive guidance who have its urge and only they have this urge who prove themselves worthy of this favour. This matter rest totally in the hands of God and there is no

25. And recite out the Book of your Lord that is being revealed to you. None can change the laws of God. You can never find anyone except Him as a refuge.

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guide and helper other than Him.

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدٰوةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَهٗ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنٰكَ عَنْهُمْ ۚ تُرِيْدُ زِيْنَةَ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۚ وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ اَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهٗ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوٰىهُ وَكَانَ اَمْرُهٗ فُرُطًا ﴿٢٨﴾[26]

The word فرط means "to exceed the limits and to oppress." Thus the expression الامر الفرط would refer to some matter that has crossed all bounds.

It was not because of any personal gain that the Prophet (sws) was anxious about the faith of the leaders and the affluent of his nation; it was purely for the elevation of his religion. He thought that if they professed faith, it would open the way for others to accept faith As a result, he would go to great lengths to pamper and give them time even at the expense of the rights of his very devout companions. This verse has stopped him from this tendency. Those having a flair for language understand that the harsh and stern tone of this verse is not directed at the Prophet (sws). It is, in fact, directed at the arrogant and the affluent who regarded the companions to be inferior and would demand that only if the Prophet (sws) snubs them away from his companionship will they be ready to hear his message.

وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّكُمْ ۟ فَمَنْ شَآءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَّمَنْ شَآءَ فَلْيَكْفُرْ ۚ اِنَّآ اَعْتَدْنَا لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ نَارًا ۙ اَحَاطَ بِهِمْ سُرَادِقُهَا ؕ وَاِنْ يَّسْتَغِيْثُوْا يُغَاثُوْا بِمَآءٍ كَالْمُهْلِ يَشْوِى الْوُجُوْهَ ؕ بِئْسَ الشَّرَابُ ؕ وَسَآءَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا ﴿٢٩﴾[27]

The expression وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ is actually وَقُلْ هٰذَا هُوَ الْحَقُّ. Instead of pampering and showing extra affection to them, the Prophet (sws) should do what the verse says.

The word مُرْتَفَقًا refers to a place on which a person can lean. I have translated it in its wider meaning as abode.

The verb يَشْوِى means "to fry" and مُهْل refers to molten brass. It expresses the intensity of heat of the water.

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ اِنَّا لَا نُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ مَنْ اَحْسَنَ عَمَلًا ﴿٣٠﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ جَنّٰتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِىْ مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْاَنْهٰرُ يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيْهَا مِنْ اَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَّيَلْبَسُوْنَ ثِيَابًا خُضْرًا مِّنْ سُنْدُسٍ وَّاِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُّتَّكِـِٕيْنَ فِيْهَا عَلَى الْاَرَآئِكِ ؕ

26. And attach yourself deeply to people who call God morning and evening to please Him. And your eyes must not turn away from them because of the allurements of worldly life, and do not pay heed to what they say who We have made heedless to Our remembrance and who are engrossed in their desires and whose matter has exceeded the limits.

27. And say: This only is the truth from your Lord. So, whoever wants can profess belief and whoever wants can take to disbelief. We have prepared for the unjust a fire whose tents shall embrace them. And if they plead for water, their pleadings shall be answered by water which shall be like molten brass. It shall roast faces. What nasty water and what a nasty abode!

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نِعْمَ الثَّوَابُ ؕ وَحَسُنَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا ﴿٣١﴾[28]

After referring to the fate of the disbelievers, these verses depict the fate of those who professed belief in the Qur'ān. Since the rich and affluent regarded them to be inferior those things are specially mentioned as reward that were a source of pride for these affluent.

I have already written regarding the details of Paradise and Hell that they are among the *mutashābihāt*. Through such parables and similes, the details of the unknown world are made comprehensible to us. As far as their actual form and shape is concerned, only God knows them. We cannot have an exact idea of the molten brass of Hell or the golden bracelets of Paradise. It may also be kept in mind that while delineating these details, the Qur'ān keeps in consideration the information and taste of the Arabs because only those parables and similes can be effective if the addressee knows their purport.

Section IV: Verses (32-44)

In the succeeding verses, the mentalities of the believers and the disbelievers are explained through a parable. Through this parable, the real misconception of those who were opposing the Prophet (sws) has become totally evident: they regarded their worldly success to be proof of the veracity of their ideology and deeds; when Muslims would warn them of God and the Hereafter, they would reply that since they were better off than them in worldly affairs, hence their beliefs and practices are necessarily right. Then from here they would also draw the inference that the Hereafter is merely a figment of imagination and if it ever takes place, there too they will be better off then the believers.

Readers may proceed to study these verses in the light of this background.

Text and Translation

وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَّثَلًا رَّجُلَيْنِ جَعَلْنَا لِاَحَدِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ مِنْ اَعْنَابٍ وَّحَفَفْنٰهُمَا بِنَخْلٍ وَّجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمَا زَرْعًا ﴿٣٢﴾
كِلْتَا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ اٰتَتْ اُكُلَهَا وَلَمْ تَظْلِمْ مِّنْهُ شَيْـًٔا ۙ وَّفَجَّرْنَا خِلٰلَهُمَا نَهَرًا ﴿٣٣﴾ وَّكَانَ لَهٗ ثَمَرٌ ۚ فَقَالَ لِصَاحِبِهٖ وَهُوَ
يُحَاوِرُهٗٓ اَنَا اَكْثَرُ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَّاَعَزُّ نَفَرًا ﴿٣٤﴾ وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهٗ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهٖ ۚ قَالَ مَآ اَظُنُّ اَنْ تَبِيْدَ هٰذِهٖٓ

28. Indeed those people who accepted faith and did righteous deeds, We shall not lay waste the reward of the deeds of those who are thorough in their deeds. For them shall be orchards of eternal residence which shall have rivers flowing beneath them. There they shall be made to wear gold bracelets and they shall adorn attires of *sundus* and *istabraq*, sitting on couches reclining. What a wonderful reward and what a wonderful abode!

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اَبَدًا ﴿٣٥﴾ وَّمَآ اَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَآئِمَةً ۙ وَّلَئِنْ رُّدِدْتُّ اِلٰى رَبِّيْ لَاَجِدَنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهَا مُنْقَلَبًا ﴿٣٦﴾ قَالَ لَهٗ صَاحِبُهٗ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهٗٓ اَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِيْ خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوّٰىكَ رَجُلًا ﴿٣٧﴾ لٰكِنَّا۠ هُوَ اللّٰهُ رَبِّيْ وَلَآ اُشْرِكُ بِرَبِّيْٓ اَحَدًا ﴿٣٨﴾ وَلَوْلَآ اِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَآءَ اللّٰهُ ۙ لَا قُوَّةَ اِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ ۚ اِنْ تَرَنِ اَنَا اَقَلَّ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَّوَلَدًا ﴿٣٩﴾ فَعَسٰى رَبِّيْٓ اَنْ يُّؤْتِيَنِ خَيْرًا مِّنْ جَنَّتِكَ وَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهَا حُسْبَانًا مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ فَتُصْبِحَ صَعِيْدًا زَلَقًا ﴿٤٠﴾ اَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَآؤُهَا غَوْرًا فَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيْعَ لَهٗ طَلَبًا ﴿٤١﴾ وَاُحِيْطَ بِثَمَرِهٖ فَاَصْبَحَ يُقَلِّبُ كَفَّيْهِ عَلٰى مَآ اَنْفَقَ فِيْهَا وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلٰى عُرُوْشِهَا وَيَقُوْلُ يٰلَيْتَنِيْ لَمْ اُشْرِكْ بِرَبِّيْٓ اَحَدًا ﴿٤٢﴾ وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَّهٗ فِئَةٌ يَّنْصُرُوْنَهٗ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنْتَصِرًا ﴿٤٣﴾ هُنَالِكَ الْوَلَايَةُ لِلّٰهِ الْحَقِّ ۭ هُوَ خَيْرٌ ثَوَابًا وَّخَيْرٌ عُقْبًا ﴿٤٤﴾

And narrate to them the parable of the two individuals. For one of them, We made two orchards of grapes, surrounded them with rows of date-palms and also placed between them pieces of cultivatable land. Both orchards bore a lot of fruit; not the slightest reduction took place. And in their centre We made a stream to flow as well. And when its time to bear fruit arrived, he argued with his companion: "I have more wealth than you and am more powerful than you with regard to numbers too." And he entered his orchard while he was being unjust to his soul. He said: "I do not think that this shall ever perish and I do not suppose that the Day of Judgement shall ever come. And even if I am returned to my Lord, I shall only find a better place to where I return." (32-36)

His companion, while conversing with him, said: "Have you denied the Being Who created you from clay, then from a drop of fluid, then made you a complete human being? But my Lord is precisely that God and I do not associate any partners with my Lord. And when you had entered your orchard, why did you not say: 'All this is God's blessing; no one has any power without God.' If you see me with lesser wealth and children than you, then it may well be that my Lord gives me a better orchard than yours and sends a calamity on your orchard from the heavens so that it becomes a barren land or its water goes into the earth and you are not able to find it in any way." (37-41)

And its fruit was visited by a calamity. So, whatever he had spent on the orchard, he ended up wringing his hand on it. And his orchard had fallen down on its fences and he was saying: "Alas! Would that I had not associated any partner with my Lord!" And he neither had any group which could help him against God nor could he himself take revenge. At that time, all authority is with God, the true God. Only His reward is better and best is the fate He ordains. (42-44)

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Explanation

وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَّثَلًا رَّجُلَيْنِ جَعَلْنَا لِاَحَدِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ مِنْ اَعْنَابٍ وَّحَفَفْنٰهُمَا بِنَخْلٍ وَّجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمَا زَرْعًا ﴿٣٢﴾[29]

The arrogant among the Quraysh are narrated a parable here which mirrors their inner and outer selves and also makes them see the fate of the conflict between truth and falsehood that was taking place between them and the Muslims. This parable is of two individuals. One of them was blessed with two grand orchards. The other did not have any such thing yet his chest had the treasure of faith in it and his heart was with filled with joy at God's comprehension.

The fact that one of them was given two and not one orchard is to express the completion of favour on him by God. In Sūrah al-Raḥmān too it is mentioned that the dwellers of Paradise will be given two orchards. This too is for completion of favour. For the Arabs, the concept of an ideal orchard was one which was of grapes; its borders have date-palms that bear fruit, enhance the splendour of the orchard and protect it from sizzling winds. Moreover, the orchard should also have pieces of cultivated land in which essential crops are sown according to the season, and there is a stream in the middle whose tributaries are made to water every part of the orchard.

كِلْتَا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ اٰتَتْ اُكُلَهَا وَلَمْ تَظْلِمْ مِّنْهُ شَيْـًٔا ۙ وَّفَجَّرْنَا خِلٰلَهُمَا نَهَرًا ﴿٣٣﴾[30]

What else can a person need in this world if he has not one but two such orchards!

وَّكَانَ لَهٗ ثَمَرٌ ۚ فَقَالَ لِصَاحِبِهٖ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهٗٓ اَنَا اَكْثَرُ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَّاَعَزُّ نَفَرًا ﴿٣٤﴾[31]

This verse states the attitude of the person who received these favours. What should have been expected from him was an expression of immense gratitude to the God Who blessed him with this favour. However, what actually happened when his companion urged him to show gratitude and warned him of God's wrath on being ungrateful, was that he began arguing with him in the way stated by the verse.

It is evident from the words وَّكَانَ لَهٗ ثَمَرٌ that this discussion took place when the crops were ready for harvesting. Obviously, on such occasions, the owner of an orchard becomes all the more inebriated with his affluence.

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29. And narrate to them the parable of the two individuals. For one of them, We made two orchards of grapes, surrounded them with rows of date-palms and also placed between them pieces of cultivatable land.

30. Both orchards bore a lot of fruit; not the slightest reduction took place. And in their centre We made a stream to flow as well.

31. And when its time to bear fruit arrived, he argued with his companion: "I have more wealth than you and am more powerful than you with regard to numbers too."

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وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهٗ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهٖ ۚ قَالَ مَآ اَظُنُّ اَنْ تَبِيْدَ هٰذِهٖٓ اَبَدًا ﴿٣٥﴾ وَّمَآ اَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَآئِمَةً ۙ وَّلَئِنْ رُّدِدْتُّ اِلٰى رَبِّيْ لَاَجِدَنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهَا مُنْقَلَبًا ﴿٣٦﴾[32]

The expression refers to the fact that he entered the orchard and uttered the words stated in the verse while he was expressing pride and arrogance on his affluence.

قَالَ لَهٗ صَاحِبُهٗ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهٗٓ اَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِيْ خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوّٰىكَ رَجُلًا ﴿٣٧﴾[33]

It is evident from this sentence that the believer has argued with his arrogant companion regarding his haughtiness and rejection of the hereafter. If he sees such power and might of God in the creation of a human being, why does he regard recreation to be far-fetched? This is a clear denial of these attributes of God.

لٰكِنَّا۠ هُوَ اللّٰهُ رَبِّيْ وَلَآ اُشْرِكُ بِرَبِّيْٓ اَحَدًا ﴿٣٨﴾[34]

This is an expression of the faith of the believer. It is evident from it that faith in God does not merely mean to believe in Him but it is essential that God be regarded as one's Lord and Master. If a person believes in God but regards someone else to be his Lord, then he is a polytheist and such polytheism is also disbelief. If a person shows conceit on his wealth and status and regards them to be a consequence of his abilities and of his personal entitlement and also arrogantly thinks that no one can take away these things from him, then this also is polytheism because such a person regards himself to have a share in God's kingdom. The meaning of monotheism is that he regards every favour he has to be from God, continue to remain grateful for it, regard himself to be accountable for it and be fully aware that whenever God wants He can take away this favour from him.

وَلَوْلَآ اِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَآءَ اللّٰهُ ۙ لَا قُوَّةَ اِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ ۚ اِنْ تَرَنِ اَنَا اَقَلَّ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَّوَلَدًا ﴿٣٩﴾[35]

In this verse, the believer has informed his arrogant companion the true requisite of faith. If his companion had found him to be lesser in wealth and children, it should not have been a cause of arrogance; on the contrary, he should have been thankful on the blessings of God. It was his duty to express and confess that all this was God's doing; without Him no one has the power to make or break anything.

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32. And he entered his orchard while he was being unjust to his soul. He said: "I do not think that this shall ever perish and I do not suppose that the Day of Judgement shall ever come. And even if I am returned to my Lord, I shall only find a better place to where I return."

33. His companion, while conversing with him, said: "Have you denied the Being Who created you from clay, then from a drop of fluid, then made you a complete human being?"

34. "But my Lord is precisely that God and I do not associate any partners with my Lord."

35. "And when you had entered your orchard, why did you not say: 'All this is God's blessing; no one has any power without God.' If you see me with lesser wealth and children than you,"

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The word اَنَا here occurs to distance the two objects of the verb. It is not directly related to the sentence. Examples of such auxiliary usage can be seen in classical Arabic literature as well as in our own languages.

فَعَسٰى رَبِّيْٓ اَنْ يُّؤْتِيَنِ خَيْرًا مِّنْ جَنَّتِكَ وَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهَا حُسْبَانًا مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ فَتُصْبِحَ صَعِيْدًا زَلَقًا ۙ﴿۴۰﴾[36]

The word حُسْبَان is the plural of حُسْبَانَة. The latter word means "thunder and hail." The word زَلَق refers to the land which is totally barren and devoid of any vegetation. Here the believer is informing his arrogant companion of a likely consequence of his haughtiness.

اَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَآؤُهَا غَوْرًا فَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيْعَ لَهٗ طَلَبًا ﴿۴۱﴾[37]

The expression غار الماء غورا would mean that "water seeped down completely in the ground." In other words, instead of thunder and hail visiting them even if the running stream that waters their orchard disappears in the land, what could they or anyone else do anything?

Earlier the statement of the believer's arrogant companion is cited in which, seeing his lush orchard that had borne fruit, commented that he cannot even think that it can ever be destroyed. All the arrogant and haughty people of this world have the same mentality. They become so engrossed in their luxuries and comforts that it weighs down heavily on them to even think that this lavishness can ever see its doom. For this reason, if anyone tries to awaken them from their oblivious slumber, they wonder how can any fissure find its way in their fortifications. However, when the time comes, God razes such forts to the ground in just one moment. At that instant, everyone can see how near was the destruction they regarded to be so unlikely. This is the reality towards which the believer

وَاُحِيْطَ بِثَمَرِهٖ فَاَصْبَحَ يُقَلِّبُ كَفَّيْهِ عَلٰى مَآ اَنْفَقَ فِيْهَا وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلٰى عُرُوْشِهَا وَيَقُوْلُ يٰلَيْتَنِيْ لَمْ اُشْرِكْ بِرَبِّيْٓ اَحَدًا ﴿۴۲﴾[38]

The expression أحيط باشى means "that thing was destroyed."

Finally, the orchard reached the same fate with which the believer had warned his companion. An earthly or heavenly calamity decimated it in the blink of an eye. The fences which had creepers of grapes woven on them fell down and the whole orchard was razed to ground. It was at this instance, that his arrogant companion awoke from his slumber and he saw that the orchard he considered to be indestructible was now lying in heaps. The wrecked orchard was before him like a corpse and he was sorrowfully rubbing his hands on its carcass: whatever he had spent on maintaining it

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36. "Then it may well be that my Lord gives me a better orchard than yours and sends a calamity on your orchard from the heavens so that it becomes a barren land."

37. "Or its water goes into the earth and you are not able to find it in any way."

38. And its fruit was visited by a calamity. So, whatever he had spent on the orchard, he ended up wringing his hand on it. And his orchard had fallen down on its fences and he was saying: "Alas! Would that I had not associated any partner with my Lord!"

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had gone down the drain, let alone earning any benefit from it. At that time, he remembered the advice of his friend and longingly expressed the desire of not associating anyone with God.

"Not associating anyone with God" means that he thought that would that he had not being arrogant enough to assume that all this was the result of his own abilities and the consequence of him deserving it; in fact, he should have thought that it was a gift of God and he should have been greateful for it.

وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَّهٗ فِئَةٌ يَّنْصُرُوْنَهٗ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنْتَصِرًا ﴿۴۳﴾[39]

The implication of this verse is that when the calamity destroyed the orchard, the group he was proud never came to him rescue. It was this group on the basis of which he had uttered the words: اَكْثَرُ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَّاَعَزُّ نَفَرًا.[40]

Moreover, he himself also did not have the strength to take revenge.

هُنَالِكَ الْوَلَايَةُ لِلّٰهِ الْحَقِّ ؕ هُوَ خَيْرٌ ثَوَابًا وَّ خَيْرٌ عُقْبًا ﴿۴۴﴾[41]

The word هُنَالِكَ points to the time of manifestation of God's punishment in the Hereafter.

The verse only mentions the fate of the righteous because the fate of the wrongdoers has already been mentioned earlier.

It may be kept in mind that whether it is the punishment of this world or of the next, the real purpose is to reward the righteous: punishing the wrongdoers is not the real purpose; it is only its necessary consequence.

Section IV: Verses (45-49)

In the succeeding verses, a parable is cited of this world whose love has blinded these slaves of the world so much that they have lost their souls and are not prepared to listen to what the Qur'ān and the Prophet (sws) are informing them of. It is stated that none of the adornments of this world will go with them to the next world. Only their righteous deeds will. So anyone who has to earn anything should do righteous deeds.

Readers may now study these verses in the light of this background.

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39. And he neither had any group which could help him against God nor could he himself take revenge.

40. "I have more wealth than you and am more powerful than you with regard to numbers too."

41. At that time, all authority is with God, the true God. Only His reward is better and best is the fate He ordains.

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Text and Translation

وَ اضۡرِبۡ لَهُمۡ مَّثَلَ الۡحَيٰوةِ الدُّنۡيَا كَمَآءٍ اَنۡزَلۡنٰهُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ فَاخۡتَلَطَ بِهٖ نَبَاتُ الۡاَرۡضِ فَاَصۡبَحَ هَشِيۡمًا تَذۡرُوۡهُ الرِّيٰحُ ؕ وَ كَانَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىۡءٍ مُّقۡتَدِرًا ﴿۴۵﴾ اَلۡمَالُ وَ الۡبَنُوۡنَ زِيۡنَةُ الۡحَيٰوةِ الدُّنۡيَا ۚ وَ الۡبٰقِيٰتُ الصّٰلِحٰتُ خَيۡرٌ عِنۡدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَّ خَيۡرٌ اَمَلًا ﴿۴۶﴾ وَ يَوۡمَ نُسَيِّرُ الۡجِبَالَ وَ تَرَى الۡاَرۡضَ بَارِزَةً ۙ وَّ حَشَرۡنٰهُمۡ فَلَمۡ نُغَادِرۡ مِنۡهُمۡ اَحَدًا ﴿۴۷﴾ وَ عُرِضُوۡا عَلٰى رَبِّكَ صَفًّا ؕ لَقَدۡ جِئۡتُمُوۡنَا كَمَا خَلَقۡنٰكُمۡ اَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ ۬ؕ بَلۡ زَعَمۡتُمۡ اَلَّنۡ نَّجۡعَلَ لَكُمۡ مَّوۡعِدًا ﴿۴۸﴾ وَ وُضِعَ الۡكِتٰبُ فَتَرَى الۡمُجۡرِمِيۡنَ مُشۡفِقِيۡنَ مِمَّا فِيۡهِ وَ يَقُوۡلُوۡنَ يٰوَيۡلَتَنَا مَالِ هٰذَا الۡكِتٰبِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيۡرَةً وَّ لَا كَبِيۡرَةً اِلَّاۤ اَحۡصٰهَا ۚ وَ وَجَدُوۡا مَا عَمِلُوۡا حَاضِرًا ؕ وَ لَا يَظۡلِمُ رَبُّكَ اَحَدًا ﴿۴۹﴾

And recount to them the parable of this worldly life: it is like rain that We brought down from the heavens. Thus the earth's vegetation became lush green because of it; then it turned into stubble that winds scatter about. And God has power over all things. Wealth and children are adornments of worldly life and the righteous deeds that remain are better with regard to reward and with regard to hope before your Lord. Bear in mind the day when We shall make the mountains move and you will see that the earth has become totally bare and We shall bring them together; then We shall not leave any of them. And all of them will be brought before your Lord in rows. We will say: "You have come before us the way We created you the first time. In fact, you thought that We shall never fix a day of promise for you for your accountability. And the register shall be brought forth. So you will see the wrongdoers trembling at whatever is in it and they will say: "Alas our misfortune! What a strange register this is that it has not omitted any small or big sin from noting it down?" And whatever they would have done, they will find all of it there, and your Lord will not be unjust to anyone. (45-49)

Explanation

وَ اضۡرِبۡ لَهُمۡ مَّثَلَ الۡحَيٰوةِ الدُّنۡيَا كَمَآءٍ اَنۡزَلۡنٰهُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ فَاخۡتَلَطَ بِهٖ نَبَاتُ الۡاَرۡضِ فَاَصۡبَحَ هَشِيۡمًا تَذۡرُوۡهُ الرِّيٰحُ ؕ وَ كَانَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىۡءٍ مُّقۡتَدِرًا ﴿۴۵﴾[42]

The expression اخۡتَلَطَ بِهٖ نَبَاتُ الۡاَرۡضِ means that the earth's vegetation became lush and luxuriant and because of their abundance and strength became intertwined.

The worldly life referred to here is the one that is discussed in the previous section of verses. In other words, its lures and attractions that infatuate a person so much that he becomes oblivious of God and the hereafter. In Sūrah al-Ḥadīd, this is explained thus:

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42. And recount to them the parable of this worldly life: it is like rain that We brought down from the heavens. Thus the earth's vegetation became lush green because of it; then it turned into stubble that winds scatter about. And God has power over all things.

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اِعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّمَا الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَّ لَهْوٌ وَّ زِيْنَةٌ وَّ تَفَاخُرٌۢ بَيْنَكُمْ وَ تَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْاَمْوَالِ وَ الْاَوْلَادِ ؕ كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ اَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهٗ ثُمَّ يَهِيْجُ فَتَرٰىهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُوْنُ حُطَامًا. (۵۷: ۱۰)

Know that the parable of the life of this world – a sport and an entertainment and an embellishment and in the matter of wealth and children a mutual show off and a quest to outdo one another in them – is that of rain whose luxuriant produce lures the hearts of the disbelievers; but then it withers and you see it turn yellow, then turns into bits and pieces. (57:10)

There are many things in this verse that need discussion and we will take them up at appropriate instances. Here the purpose is to only direct attention to the fact that this verse actually explains the parable of worldly life mentioned in this verse: it refers to a life of sport and an entertainment and a quest to outdo one another in material gains. It is these lures that make the affluent close their eyes as they get entangled in them. Except for luxury and comfort, cinema and theatre, cars and houses, wealth and assets, money and bank accounts, status and position nothing carries weight in their eyes. So engrossed they become in these that they do not have any time for other things.

In a similar way, it is stated in the verse under discussion that these people should be told that the life they have been infatuated with and think that it will never see its doom is transient. Rain does temporarily create luxuriance. Yet, not far away is the time when it will whither away. God has power over all things. Just has He has produced this luxuriance, He will make it decay.

اَلْمَالُ وَ الْبَنُوْنَ زِيْنَةُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۚ وَ الْبٰقِيٰتُ الصّٰلِحٰتُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَّ خَيْرٌ اَمَلًا ﴿۴۶﴾[43]

Since in Arabia, the defence and power of a person depended on familial and tribal support, his strength depended on an abundance of children. They would specially mention the amount of children they had in their gatherings held to express mutual superiority. Earlier the words express this very aspect: اَنَا اَكْثَرُ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَّ اَعَزُّ نَفَرًا.[44]

The verse states that if a person has to pin hopes on it should be righteous deeds. They will reap eternal blessings for him.

وَ يَوْمَ نُسَيِّرُ الْجِبَالَ وَ تَرَى الْاَرْضَ بَارِزَةً ۙ وَّ حَشَرْنٰهُمْ فَلَمْ نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ اَحَدًا ﴿۴۷﴾[45]

The implication of this verse is that today the earth and appears lush and luxuriant;

43. Wealth and children are adornments of worldly life and the righteous deeds that remain are better with regard to reward and with regard to hope before your Lord.

44. "I have more wealth than you and am more powerful than you with regard to numbers too."

45. Bear in mind the day when We shall make the mountains move and you will see that the earth has become totally bare and We shall bring them together; then We shall not leave any of them.

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mountains are implanted in it; magnificent forts are erected in it; gardens and orchards embellish it. However, a day will come when even these mountains shall be uprooted, what to speak of other things and the land will become bare and barren. The earth will be stripped of all its adornments. Everyone will be gathered by God and none will be left whether rich or poor, master or slave, idol or idolater.

وَعُرِضُوْا عَلٰى رَبِّكَ صَفًّا ؕ لَقَدْ جِئْتُمُوْنَا كَمَا خَلَقْنٰكُمْ اَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍۭ ۚ بَلْ زَعَمْتُمْ اَلَّنْ نَّجْعَلَ لَكُمْ مَّوْعِدًا ﴿۴۸﴾[46]

On that day, everyone will be brought before God. Today these people arrogantly strut on their wealth but on that day they will appear before their like slaves with hands tied; neither will they have their battalion of guards and attendants about them nor the assets they proudly boasted about; everything will be left behind. Precisely how could they have imagined this state of helplessness for they thought that no day of accountability has been fixed for them?

وَ وُضِعَ الْكِتٰبُ فَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ مُشْفِقِيْنَ مِمَّا فِيْهِ وَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ يٰوَيْلَتَنَا مَالِ هٰذَا الْكِتٰبِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيْرَةً وَّ لَا كَبِيْرَةً اِلَّاۤ اَحْصٰىهَا ۚ وَ وَجَدُوْا مَا عَمِلُوْا حَاضِرًا ؕ وَ لَا يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ اَحَدًا ﴿۴۹﴾[47]

The word الْكِتٰبُ here means the register of deeds of people. All the elaborate arrangement mentioned in the verse for recording deeds would be because God does not want to be unjust to anyone. Everyone will get what he earned.

Section V: Verses (50-59)

In the succeeding verses, the Quraysh are warned with reference to the incident of Adam (sws) and Satan: they have followed the footsteps of Satan in their attitude of denial. They regard him to be their real help and support and worship him and his progeny. It was he who had thrown a challenge of his animosity against the progeny of Adam (sws). They are relying on a very evil substitute. The Qur'ān that is being read out to them is a great mercy for them. It is presenting before them the reality in various styles so that they can truly appreciate it. On the contrary, they are adamant to see God's torment instead of His mercy and want His scourge instead of divine

46. And all of them will be brought before your Lord in rows. We will say: "You have come before us the way We created you the first time. In fact, you thought that We shall never fix a day of promise for you for your accountability.

47. And the register shall be brought forth. So you will see the wrongdoers trembling at whatever is in it and they will say: "Alas our misfortune! What a strange register this is that it has not omitted any small or big sin from noting it down?" And whatever they would have done, they will find all of it there, and your Lord will not be unjust to anyone.

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fodder. They are contending that unless they are able to observe God's punishment, they will not believe in the punishment they are being warned of by the Qur'ān. At the end, the Prophet (sws) is assured that it is not the responsibility of a messenger of God to bring punishment; his responsibility is to only warn people of it and to give glad tidings to those who accept faith. The Prophet (sws) should continue to discharge his responsibility and leave these people to themselves because their hearts have become impervious to warning. His lord is gracious and merciful and for this reason giving them respite. If He wanted to immediately punish them, He could break their backs. However, all His acts are based on wisdom. Thus the Prophet (sws) should fully trust him and patiently do his work.

Readers may now study these verses in the light of his background.

Text and Translation

وَاِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اسْجُدُوْا لِاٰدَمَ فَسَجَدُوْٓا اِلَّآ اِبْلِيْسَ ؕ كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَفَسَقَ عَنْ اَمْرِ رَبِّهٖ ؕ اَفَتَتَّخِذُوْنَهٗ وَذُرِّيَّتَهٗٓ اَوْلِيَآءَ مِنْ دُوْنِيْ وَهُمْ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ ؕ بِئْسَ لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ بَدَلًا ﴿۵۰﴾ مَآ اَشْهَدْتُّهُمْ خَلْقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَ لَا خَلْقَ اَنْفُسِهِمْ ۪ وَمَا كُنْتُ مُتَّخِذَ الْمُضِلِّيْنَ عَضُدًا ﴿۵۱﴾ وَيَوْمَ يَقُوْلُ نَادُوْا شُرَكَآءِيَ الَّذِيْنَ زَعَمْتُمْ فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيْبُوْا لَهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَّوْبِقًا ﴿۵۲﴾ وَرَاَ الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ النَّارَ فَظَنُّوْٓا اَنَّهُمْ مُّوَاقِعُوْهَا وَلَمْ يَجِدُوْا عَنْهَا مَصْرِفًا ﴿۵۳﴾ وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِيْ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ ؕ وَكَانَ الْاِنْسَانُ اَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا ﴿۵۴﴾ وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ اَنْ يُّؤْمِنُوْٓا اِذْ جَآءَهُمُ الْهُدٰى وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوْا رَبَّهُمْ اِلَّآ اَنْ تَاْتِيَهُمْ سُنَّةُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ اَوْ يَاْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ قُبُلًا ﴿۵۵﴾ وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ اِلَّا مُبَشِّرِيْنَ وَمُنْذِرِيْنَ ۚ وَيُجَادِلُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوْا بِهِ الْحَقَّ وَاتَّخَذُوْٓا اٰيٰتِيْ وَمَآ اُنْذِرُوْا هُزُوًا ﴿۵۶﴾ وَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهٖ فَاَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا وَنَسِيَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدٰهُ ؕ اِنَّا جَعَلْنَا عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ اَكِنَّةً اَنْ يَّفْقَهُوْهُ وَفِيْٓ اٰذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا ؕ وَاِنْ تَدْعُهُمْ اِلَى الْهُدٰى فَلَنْ يَّهْتَدُوْٓا اِذًا اَبَدًا ﴿۵۷﴾ وَرَبُّكَ الْغَفُوْرُ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ ؕ لَوْ يُؤَاخِذُهُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوْا لَعَجَّلَ لَهُمُ الْعَذَابَ ؕ بَلْ لَّهُمْ مَّوْعِدٌ لَّنْ يَّجِدُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ مَوْئِلًا ﴿۵۸﴾ وَتِلْكَ الْقُرٰى اَهْلَكْنٰهُمْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُوْا وَجَعَلْنَا لِمَهْلِكِهِمْ مَّوْعِدًا ﴿۵۹﴾

And remember when We directed the angels: "Prostrate before Adam." So, all prostrated except Iblīs. He was among the jinn. Thus, he disobeyed the directive of his Lord. So, leaving Me, you make him and his progeny as your guardian, even though they are your enemies? What an evil substitute for the wrongdoers! And I neither called any of them at the time of creating the heavens and the earth nor at the time of their own creation. And I am not One Who makes My helpers those who lead astray. (50-51)

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And remember the day when He says: "Call now those who you regarded as My associates." So, they will call them, but they will not reply. And We shall place before them a ditch of destruction and the wrongdoers will see Hell and will think that they are about to fall in it, and will not be able to find any way to escape from it. (52-53)

And We have mentioned all kinds of warnings in various ways in this Qur'ān to guide people, but human beings are the most quarrelsome. And after guidance has come to people, the only thing stopping them from accepting faith and seeking forgiveness from their Lord is that the fate met by the previous ones also manifests for them or the torment appears from in front them. And We only send messengers as bearers of glad tidings and warnings, and these disbelievers frivolously dispute the truth with the help of evil in order to defeat the truth. And they have made My revelations and that of which they have been warned a piece of jest. And who can be more unjust than those who when reminded through their Lord's revelations turn away and forget the earning of their hands. And We have put covers on their hearts so that they are not able to understand it and have plugged their ears so that they are not able to listen to it. So, however much you may call them to guidance, they shall never be guided. And your Lord is very Forgiving and Merciful. Had He wanted to seize them right away because of their deeds, He would have immediately sent them a torment. Yet a time has been appointed for them and they shall not be able to find any refuge against it. And these are the cities We destroyed when their people became unjust to themselves and We appointed a time for their destruction. (54-59)

Explanation

وَاِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اسْجُدُوْا لِاٰدَمَ فَسَجَدُوْٓا اِلَّآ اِبْلِيْسَ ؕ كَانَ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَفَسَقَ عَنْ اَمْرِ رَبِّهٖ ؕ اَفَتَتَّخِذُوْنَهٗ وَذُرِّيَّتَهٗٓ اَوْلِيَآءَ مِنْ دُوْنِيْ وَهُمْ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ ؕ بِئْسَ لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ بَدَلًا ﴿۵۰﴾[48]

The incident of Adam (sws) and Satan has been discussed in detail in Sūrah al-Baqarah and Sūrah al-A'rāf. Here, regarding the species of Satan, this much should be kept in mind that he was from among the jinnkind. He disobeyed God and was condemned. Satan is not the name of a whole category of creatures, as some people have understood. It is, in fact, the title of the jinn who deceived Adam (sws). His enmity with Adam (sws) and his progeny is well known. His progeny is fulfilling the mission of its forefather with full adeptness and they have won over many so many from the progeny of Adam (sws) to lead other human beings astray that Satan himself would be very proud and profusely praise them for surpassing his own feat.

Here the arrogant among the Quraysh are reminded of the eternal enmity of Satan

48. And remember when We directed the angels: "Prostrate before Adam." So, all prostrated except Iblīs. He was among the jinn. Thus, he disobeyed the directive of his Lord. So, leaving Me, you make him and his progeny as your guardian, even though they are your enemies? What an evil substitute for the wrongdoers!

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and his progeny. Sorrow is expressed that they have made them their real guardians and helpers, and forsaken God. Then while turning away from them it is stated that how evil a substitute they have adopted.

Here it should be kept in mind what I have elaborated upon while explaining Sūrah al-An‘ām: the Idolaters of Arabia would worship the jinn in various ways. They regarded every mountain and valley to be in charge of a devil and jinn and in order to protect themselves from their evil, they would worship them and present offerings to them. Some jinn were considered so dangerous that in order to please them these unfortunate people would even sacrifice their children. They thought that if one of the children was not sacrificed to please one of the jinn, he would consume all of them.

In this verse, the Qur’ān has appealed to the sense of hounour of the Quraysh that Iblīs was from amog the jinn. They have become his disciples in spite of the fact that Ibīs had shown such enmity for Adam (sws).

The word “wrongdoers” refers to the idolaters. The sentence بِئْسَ لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ بَدَلًا expresses sorrow and wonder: if these wrongdoers found a substitute for God, it was the eternal enemy of their forefather and his progeny. This is the height of wretchedness.

مَآ اَشْهَدْتُّهُمْ خَلْقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَلَا خَلْقَ اَنْفُسِهِمْ ۖ وَمَا كُنْتُ مُتَّخِذَ الْمُضِلِّيْنَ عَضُدًا ﴿٥١﴾[49]

The style of this verse is sarcastic: these people have so generously made these devils associates of God even though He never called them for help in creating them or the heavens and earth. God was never going to call such creatures who lead people astray. Yet, today they have been included in His divinity in such a way as if every feat was achieved by them.

وَيَوْمَ يَقُوْلُ نَادُوْا شُرَكَآءِيَ الَّذِيْنَ زَعَمْتُمْ فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيْبُوْا لَهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَّوْبِقًا ﴿٥٢﴾[50]

This verse reminds them of their deprivation on that day. The pit of destruction will obstruct the idolaters and their idols from one another

وَرَاَ الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ النَّارَ فَظَنُّوْٓا اَنَّهُمْ مُّوَاقِعُوْهَا وَلَمْ يَجِدُوْا عَنْهَا مَصْرِفًا ﴿٥٣﴾[51]

The verse expresses the state of helplessness of the wrongdoers: they will have knowledge of their destruction and fall into it while seeing their fate.

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49. And I neither called any of them at the time of creating the heavens and the earth nor at the time of their own creation. And I am not One Who makes My helpers those who lead astray.

50. And remember the day when He says: “Call now those who you regarded as My associates.” So, they will call them, but they will not reply. And We shall place before them a ditch of destruction.

51. And We shall place before them a ditch of destruction and the wrongdoers will see Hell and will think that they are about to fall in it, and will not be able to find any way to escape from it.

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وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِيْ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ ؕ وَكَانَ الْاِنْسَانُ اَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا ﴿۵۴﴾[52]

The word مَثَل refer to the facts and realities of the hereafter and of the unknown world that are presented in the form of parables in order to warn people and the word الْاِنْسَان refers to the quarrelsome Quraysh that are already under discussion. A general word has been used in order to express aversion from them.

وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ اَنْ يُّؤْمِنُوْٓا اِذْ جَآءَهُمُ الْهُدٰى وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوْا رَبَّهُمْ اِلَّآ اَنْ تَاْتِيَهُمْ سُنَّةُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ اَوْ يَاْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ قُبُلًا ﴿۵۵﴾[53]

The word النَّاس here also refers to the Quraysh which are being addressed since the previous verses and the word قُبُل means "from the front" and "face to face."

The implication of the verse is that the Qur'ān has warned them in various ways and nothing is hidden; however, people who want to evade the reality find various excuses for this. It is asserted that these people will not believe in any guidance and seek forgiveness unless one of the two situations alluded to in the verse takes place. The Qur'ān is inviting them to divine fodder but they are demanding divine punishment. There is no remedy for such wretched people. They do not know that when divine punishment descends, it will not go away without decimating them. So what will they believe in after that?

وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ اِلَّا مُبَشِّرِيْنَ وَمُنْذِرِيْنَ ۚ وَيُجَادِلُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوْا بِهِ الْحَقَّ وَاتَّخَذُوْٓا اٰيٰتِيْ وَمَآ اُنْذِرُوْا هُزُوًا ﴿۵۶﴾[54]

This verse is an answer to the earlier demand of punishment. It is absolutely baseless for these people to demand this from their messengers and is tantamount to defeating truth through evil. Those who are playing this prank have not understood the reality of torment and of the hereafter. They have made fun of the verses of warning and of God's punishment.

وَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهٖ فَاَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا وَنَسِيَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدٰهُ ؕ اِنَّا جَعَلْنَا عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ اَكِنَّةً اَنْ يَّفْقَهُوْهُ وَفِيْٓ اٰذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا ؕ وَاِنْ تَدْعُهُمْ اِلَى الْهُدٰى فَلَنْ يَّهْتَدُوْٓا اِذًا اَبَدًا ﴿۵۷﴾[55]

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52. And We have mentioned all kinds of warnings in various ways in this Qur'ān to guide people, but human beings are the most quarrelsome.

53. And after guidance has come to people, the only thing stopping them from accepting faith and seeking forgiveness from their Lord is that the fate met by the previous ones also manifests for them or the torment appears from in front them.

54. And We only send messengers as bearers of glad tidings and warnings, and these disbelievers frivolously dispute the truth with the help of evil in order to defeat the truth. And they have made My revelations and that of which they have been warned a piece of jest.

55. And who can be more unjust than those who when reminded through their Lord's

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The implication of this verse is that if these people are being given respite in spite of what they do as mentioned, it is purely because of God's mercy. However, because of their evil deeds, their faculties have been barred from accepting guidance from the Qur'ān.

The actual structure of the verse would be: اَكِنَّةً اَنْ يَّفْقَهُوْهُ وَفِيْٓ اٰذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا مِنْ اَنْ يَسْمَعُوْهُ . Here, before the letter اَن, words to the effect من or كراهة are suppressed in accordance with linguistic principles of Arabic. Similarly, on the basis of parallelism, words like أَنْ يَسْمَعُوْهُ are suppressed after وَفِيْٓ اٰذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا.

At the end of the verse, the Prophet (sws) is told that since their faculties have been rendered ineffective because of their attitude, they will not accept guidance howevermuch he may recite God's revelations before them. He should now consign their matter to God and patiently continue to discharge his obligation so that the truth is fully communicated to them in a conclusive manner.

وَرَبُّكَ الْغَفُوْرُ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ ۭ لَوْ يُؤَاخِذُهُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوْا لَعَجَّلَ لَهُمُ الْعَذَابَ ۭ بَلْ لَّهُمْ مَّوْعِدٌ لَّنْ يَّجِدُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ مَوْىِٕلًا ۝۵۸ [56]

The word مَوْىِٕل means "a place of refuge."

The reason is now stated that if so wretched are these people that they will never accept guidance, why should they be kept alive. Why should God not send His torment to them? It is because God is very gracious and merciful and gives respite to the wrongdoers to the ultimate extent. Otherwise, if He wants to seize them immediately, none can stop Him. He is in no haste for He has appointed a time to grab them. When the time comes, they will not be able to escape from Him anywhere.

وَتِلْكَ الْقُرٰٓى اَهْلَكْنٰهُمْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُوْا وَجَعَلْنَا لِمَهْلِكِهِمْ مَّوْعِدًا ۝۵۹ [57]

This verse presents historical evidence on what is said earlier.

Section V: Verses (60-82)

Earlier, the Prophet (sws) has been urged to exercise patience on the attitude of his enemies and the arrogant. In the succeeding verses, this topic is brought to completion.

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revelations turn away and forget the earning of their hands. And We have put covers on their hearts so that they are not able to understand it and have plugged their ears so that they are not able to listen to it. So, however much you may call them to guidance, they shall never be guided.

56. And your Lord is very Forgiving and Merciful. Had He wanted to seize them right away because of their deeds, He would have immediately sent them a torment. Yet a time has been appointed for them and they shall not be able to find any refuge against it.

57. And these are the cities We destroyed when their people became unjust to themselves and We appointed a time for their destruction.

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It is as if the *sūrah* has reached its pinnacle at this stage. It should be kept in mind that patience is not a negative attitude. It is a positive reality. It is on it that all rights thrive and sustain. He who does not have this quality in him will neither be able to discharge his obligations towards God nor to his fellow human beings. In order for this attribute to be rightly grounded in a person his beliefs should be fully grounded. Otherwise, patience cannot be just adopted from outside. There three bases related to beliefs:

Firstly, whatever happens in this world happens because of God's permission and under His will and intention. Without His intention, even a particle cannot move from its place.

Secondly, God is an embodiment of good and is wise. This none of His intention is without wisdom. If He gives respite to evildoers, it is not because He loves them or is helpless before them. In this respite too, He wants to nourish a great good. Similarly, if He afflicts hardships on the righteous, it is not because He wants to put them through hardship but because He wants to open the way of something in beneficial for them.

Thirdly, the extent of knowledge human beings can gain is limited. Hence, they cannot have knowledge of the wisdom of all of His intentions. All the secrets of these intentions will only stand revealed in the hereafter. The right attitude for human beings in this world is that they should be patient and grateful on all of God's decisions and keep discharging their duties. They should rest assured that sweetness is hidden under the hardships of today. They will taste it tomorrow.

In order to understand this secret of the universe, the account of an educational journey of Moses (sws) is related. The way these secrets of wisdom become evident through incidents is much more powerful than mere statements. The nation for whose reformation and education Moses (sws) was deputed was very weak and meek and the enemy at hand was very powerful and mighty. For this reason, in accordance with God's wisdom, it became essential that he be well instructed and trained in wisdom so that he is able to come to grips with this challenge with full determination. Thus God sent him to a person who was blessed with special knowledge by Him. This person revealed some secrets of God at His best to Moses (sws). These were very beneficial to him for the purpose of his education in submitting to the decisions of God and accepting them.

This was the purpose of Moses' journey. However, from God knows where our exegetes have relied on a strange narrative while explaining this incident. According to this narrative, once Moses (sws) audaciously claimed that at that time he was the most knowledgeable person; in order to reprimand him for saying this, God sent him to a person so that he knows that there was a more knowledgeable person than him.

In the first place, why would Moses (sws) pass such an out of place remark, and if he did, then it was not incorrect either. It is a fact that a prophet is the most knowledgeable of all people of his times and he unequivocally proclaims this reality before his nation. Every prophet has declared اِنِّیْٓ اَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ (I know from God what you do not know). Never has this statement been regarded as an expression of

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arrogance or he be regarded worthy of reprimand for saying this. So why should Moses (sws) deserve this treatment? Nevertheless, in my opinion this occasion of revelation is totally baseless and the actual reality in this regard is what has been pointed to earlier.

Readers may now proceed to study these verses in the light of this background.

Text and Translation

وَاِذْ قَالَ مُوْسٰى لِفَتٰىهُ لَآ اَبْرَحُ حَتّٰٓى اَبْلُغَ مَجْمَعَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ اَوْ اَمْضِيَ حُقُبًا ﴿٦٠﴾ فَلَمَّا بَلَغَا مَجْمَعَ بَيْنِهِمَا
نَسِيَا حُوْتَهُمَا فَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيْلَهٗ فِي الْبَحْرِ سَرَبًا ﴿٦١﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَا قَالَ لِفَتٰىهُ اٰتِنَا غَدَآءَنَا ۡ لَقَدْ لَقِيْنَا مِنْ
سَفَرِنَا هٰذَا نَصَبًا ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالَ اَرَءَيْتَ اِذْ اَوَيْنَآ اِلَى الصَّخْرَةِ فَاِنِّيْ نَسِيْتُ الْحُوْتَ ۡ وَمَآ اَنْسٰنِيْهُ اِلَّا الشَّيْطٰنُ اَنْ
اَذْكُرَهٗ ۚ وَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيْلَهٗ فِي الْبَحْرِ ۖ عَجَبًا ﴿٦٣﴾ قَالَ ذٰلِكَ مَا كُنَّا نَبْغِ ۖ فَارْتَدَّا عَلٰٓى اٰثَارِهِمَا قَصَصًا ﴿٦٤﴾ فَوَجَدَا
عَبْدًا مِّنْ عِبَادِنَآ اٰتَيْنٰهُ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا وَعَلَّمْنٰهُ مِنْ لَّدُنَّا عِلْمًا ﴿٦٥﴾ قَالَ لَهٗ مُوْسٰى هَلْ اَتَّبِعُكَ عَلٰٓى اَنْ
تُعَلِّمَنِ مِمَّا عُلِّمْتَ رُشْدًا ﴿٦٦﴾ قَالَ اِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيْعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿٦٧﴾ وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلٰى مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهٖ خُبْرًا ﴿٦٨﴾
قَالَ سَتَجِدُنِيْٓ اِنْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ صَابِرًا وَّلَآ اَعْصِيْ لَكَ اَمْرًا ﴿٦٩﴾ قَالَ فَاِنِ اتَّبَعْتَنِيْ فَلَا تَسْـَٔلْنِيْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ حَتّٰٓى
اُحْدِثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا ﴿٧٠﴾ فَانْطَلَقَا ۟ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا رَكِبَا فِي السَّفِيْنَةِ خَرَقَهَا ۭ قَالَ اَخَرَقْتَهَا لِتُغْرِقَ اَهْلَهَا ۚ لَقَدْ
جِئْتَ شَيْـًٔا اِمْرًا ﴿٧١﴾ قَالَ اَلَمْ اَقُلْ اِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيْعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿٧٢﴾ قَالَ لَا تُؤَاخِذْنِيْ بِمَا نَسِيْتُ وَلَا
تُرْهِقْنِيْ مِنْ اَمْرِيْ عُسْرًا ﴿٧٣﴾ فَانْطَلَقَا ۟ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا لَقِيَا غُلٰمًا فَقَتَلَهٗ ۙ قَالَ اَقَتَلْتَ نَفْسًا زَكِيَّةًۢ بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ ۭ
لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْـًٔا نُّكْرًا ﴿٧٤﴾ قَالَ اَلَمْ اَقُلْ لَّكَ اِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيْعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿٧٥﴾ قَالَ اِنْ سَاَلْتُكَ عَنْ شَيْءٍ
بَعْدَهَا فَلَا تُصٰحِبْنِيْ ۚ قَدْ بَلَغْتَ مِنْ لَّدُنِّيْ عُذْرًا ﴿٧٦﴾ فَانْطَلَقَا ۟ حَتّٰٓى اِذَآ اَتَيَآ اَهْلَ قَرْيَةِ ِۨاسْتَطْعَمَآ اَهْلَهَا
فَاَبَوْا اَنْ يُّضَيِّفُوْهُمَا فَوَجَدَا فِيْهَا جِدَارًا يُّرِيْدُ اَنْ يَّنْقَضَّ فَاَقَامَهٗ ۭ قَالَ لَوْ شِئْتَ لَتَّخَذْتَ عَلَيْهِ اَجْرًا ﴿٧٧﴾
قَالَ هٰذَا فِرَاقُ بَيْنِيْ وَبَيْنِكَ ۚ سَاُنَبِّئُكَ بِتَاْوِيْلِ مَا لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ عَّلَيْهِ صَبْرًا ﴿٧٨﴾ اَمَّا السَّفِيْنَةُ فَكَانَتْ
لِمَسٰكِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ فِي الْبَحْرِ فَاَرَدْتُّ اَنْ اَعِيْبَهَا وَكَانَ وَرَآءَهُمْ مَّلِكٌ يَّاْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِيْنَةٍ غَصْبًا ﴿٧٩﴾ وَاَمَّا
الْغُلٰمُ فَكَانَ اَبَوٰهُ مُؤْمِنَيْنِ فَخَشِيْنَآ اَنْ يُّرْهِقَهُمَا طُغْيَانًا وَّكُفْرًا ﴿٨٠﴾ فَاَرَدْنَآ اَنْ يُّبْدِلَهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُ
زَكٰوةً وَّاَقْرَبَ رُحْمًا ﴿٨١﴾ وَاَمَّا الْجِدَارُ فَكَانَ لِغُلٰمَيْنِ يَتِيْمَيْنِ فِي الْمَدِيْنَةِ وَكَانَ تَحْتَهٗ كَنْزٌ لَّهُمَا وَكَانَ اَبُوْهُمَا

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صَالِحًا ۚ فَاَرَادَ رَبُّكَ اَنْ يَّبْلُغَآ اَشُدَّهُمَا وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنْزَهُمَا ۖ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ ۚ وَمَا فَعَلْتُهٗ عَنْ اَمْرِىْ ۭ ذٰلِكَ تَاْوِيْلُ مَا لَمْ تَسْطِعْ عَّلَيْهِ صَبْرًا ۝۸۲

And bear in mind when Moses said to his student: "I shall keep walking until I reach the place where the two seas meet or shall keep walking for years in this way." Thus when they reached their meeting place, they forgot their fish and it went forth towards the sea. Then when they had moved forward, Moses said to his student: "Bring our food now. We are very tired because of this journey of Ours." The student replied: "What should I say. When we took refuge near the large rock, I forgot the fish and it was Satan who made me negligent of remembering it and it took to the sea in a strange way." Moses said: "It was that which we were seeking." Thus they returned tracing their footsteps. So, they found a servant from among Our servants whom We had specially blessed and had bestowed on him special knowledge from Ourselves. (60-65)

Moses requested him: "Can I remain with you on the condition that you teach me a little also from the knowledge given to you?" He replied: "You will not be able to be patient along with me and how at all can you be patient at what is beyond your sphere of knowledge?" Moses said: "God willing, you will find me patient; I shall not disobey your directive in any matter." (66-69)

He said: "If you have to remain with me, then it will be on the condition that you will not ask me about anything until I mention it to you myself." At last, both of them set off until when they boarded a ship, that person made a hole in it. Moses said: "Have you made a hole in it that you may drown the people of the ship? This is a very strange thing that you have done!" He said: "Did I not say to you that you will not be able to exercise patience along with me?" Moses said: "Do not hold me accountable for what I forgot and be not so stern with me in my matter." (70-73)

Then both set off until when they met a boy, he killed him. Moses said: "You have slain an innocent boy even though he has not slain anyone? This is a very terrible thing that you have done." He said: "Did I not say to you that you will not be able to exercise patience along with me?" Moses said: "If after this I ask you about anything, you may not keep me with you. You would have reached an excuse from me." At this, both journeyed until when they reached the inhabitants of a city, they requested their people to provide food. But they refused their hospitality. Then they saw a wall there that was about to fall. So, he erected that wall. Moses said: "If you wanted, you could have asked for some payment for it." He replied: "Now this is parting of ways between you and me. I shall now tell you the reality behind the acts on which you were not able to exercise patience. (74-78)

As for the ship, it belonged to some poor individuals who would earn their living in the sea. I intended to make it defective and there lived a king ahead who was snatching every ship. (79)

As for the boy, his parents were people of faith. We feared that after growing up, he

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may be offensive to them because of rebelliousness and ingratitude. Hence We wanted that their Lord bless them with a child in his place who is purer and more affectionate than him. (80-81)

And as for the matter of the wall, it belonged to two orphans of the city. Beneath it was their treasure, and their father was a pious person. Your Lord wanted that they reach maturity and take out their treasure themselves. This happened because of your God's grace. And all this that I did was not out of my own intention. This is the reality behind the acts on which you were not able to show patience." (82)

Explanation

وَاِذْ قَالَ مُوْسٰى لِفَتٰىهُ لَآ اَبْرَحُ حَتّٰٓى اَبْلُغَ مَجْمَعَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ اَوْ اَمْضِيَ حُقُبًا ﴿٦٠﴾[58]

I have translated the word فَتٰى as "student" instead of "servant" or "young man." Incorporated in this word is both the young age and nature of relationship of that boy with Moses (sws). The way Moses (sws) has interacted with the boy during this journey shows that he was not merely his servant or attendant. He was like a companion who was his student and attendant.

The meeting place of the two seas is most probably the point where the gulf of 'Aqabah and the Suez canal meet. It was from here that Moses (sws) spent the phases of his life with the Israelites.

The word حُقُب means "an era of time", "year", "a period of eighty years or even more."

Moses (sws) must have been divinely asked to undertake this journey. He expressed this desire before his student. Every word spoken by him radiates his interest and passion for this journey. His words reflect his intention that if his student has the strength, he should accompany him for he is to embark on this journey come what may. He will either reach his destination or be overtaken by death.

فَلَمَّا بَلَغَا مَجْمَعَ بَيْنِهِمَا نَسِيَا حُوْتَهُمَا فَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيْلَهٗ فِي الْبَحْرِ سَرَبًا ﴿٦١﴾[59]

The word سَرَب means "flowing away of water from a utensil."

Here a major part of the happenings that ensued is suppressed in words. This is evident from concomitant indications. Both journeyed and reached the meeting place of the seas. Here they rested in the valley of a mountain for some time. When they departed from there, they forgot to take the fish that was to be eaten for breakfast. After travelling a certain distance, Moses' (sws) student remembered this blemish and they returned to fetch the fish. When they reached that place, the student saw the fish

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58. And bear in mind when Moses said to his student: "I shall keep walking until I reach the place where the two seas meet or shall keep walking for years in this way."

59. Thus when they reached their meeting place, they forgot their fish and it went forth towards the sea.

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taking to the sea to survive. So strange was this incident that he did not dared to mention it to Moses (sws) thinking that he would not believe him and he may have to face severe rebuke from him. Thus they moved forward and the student continued to remain reluctant whether he should disclose this to Moses (sws) or not. On the other hand, Moses (sws) must have thought that his student had picked up the fish.

فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَا قَالَ لِفَتٰىهُ اٰتِنَا غَدَآءَنَا ۡ لَقَدۡ لَقِيۡنَا مِنۡ سَفَرِنَا هٰذَا نَصَبًا ﴿۶۲﴾[60]

The word غَدَآءَ means "breakfast" and نَصَب means "fatigue." This word is not appropriate at all for non-roasted fish or fish that is alive. It is a clear indication that the fish was roasted.

Finally, when they were at some distance from that place, Moses (sws) asked his student to give him breakfast, as he was exhausted.

قَالَ اَرَءَيۡتَ اِذۡ اَوَيۡنَاۤ اِلَى الصَّخۡرَةِ فَاِنِّىۡ نَسِيۡتُ الۡحُوۡتَ ۡ وَمَاۤ اَنۡسٰنِيۡهُ اِلَّا الشَّيۡطٰنُ اَنۡ اَذۡكُرَهٗ ۚ وَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيۡلَهٗ فِى الۡبَحۡرِ ۖ عَجَبًا ﴿۶۳﴾[61]

The student now had no option but to reveal the truth to Moses (sws).

The word اَرَءَيۡتَ expresses hesitation of the student. It is like saying "what should I say ..." or "just look and see ..."

The words "and it was Satan who made me negligent of remembering it" politely express his apology on his mistake

قَالَ ذٰلِكَ مَا كُنَّا نَبۡغِ ۖ فَارۡتَدَّا عَلٰۤى اٰثَارِهِمَا قَصَصًا ﴿۶۴﴾[62]

Expecting rebuke from Moses (sws), the student revealed the situation in a state of fear. But Moses (sws) jumped to the news since it was at this place where he had been instructed to meet a servant of God who would reveal certain secrets to him. Thus as soon as he became aware of this, they retraced their steps to the place.

فَوَجَدَا عَبۡدًا مِّنۡ عِبَادِنَاۤ اٰتَيۡنٰهُ رَحۡمَةً مِّنۡ عِنۡدِنَا وَعَلَّمۡنٰهُ مِنۡ لَّدُنَّا عِلۡمًا ﴿۶۵﴾[63]

Here they met an extraordinary individual who had been specially blessed from God and given exclusive knowledge. The Qur'ān has not named this individual. It has only mentioned some particular attributes he possessed. In some narratives, he has been

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60. Then when they had moved forward, Moses said to his student: "Bring our food now. We are very tired because of this journey of Ours."

61. The student replied: "What should I say. When we took refuge near the large rock, I forgot the fish and it was Satan who made me negligent of remembering it and it took to the sea in a strange way."

62. Moses said: "It was that which we were seeking." Thus they returned tracing their footsteps.

63. So, they found a servant from among Our servants whom We had specially blessed and had bestowed on him special knowledge from Ourselves.

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named as Khiḍr. Since I do not find any reason to reject these narratives, I shall adopt this name.

It is evident from certain indications that Khiḍr was a prophet of God. The first and most obvious reason for this is that a celebrated prophet in fact messenger as Moses (sws) was sent to him for instruction and to gain knowledge. If Khiḍr was not a prophet, then it would be very inappropriate for a prophet to be sent to a non-prophet for instruction. Though no prophet is mentioned in the Qur'ān or the Torah by this name, this is not important. The Qur'ān itself has specified that it has not mentioned many prophets. Same is the case with the Torah too. It may be kept in mind – as specified in the Qur'ān – that God has given superiority to every prophet in some respect or another. Khiḍr too had this superiority in a specific sphere. Similar is the case with Moses (sws) too. If Moses (sws) learnt some things from him, then this does not necessitate that Khiḍr has absolute superiority over him.

The second reason for regarding Khiḍr to be a prophet is that the attributes the Qur'ān has mentioned about him match the ones a prophet has. Thus, for example, it is said: "He is a servant from among Our servants whom We had specially blessed and had bestowed on him special knowledge from Ourselves." Moreover, about his own acts, Khiḍr has specified that he had not done them from his own will; in fact, he had done them under God's will. All these aspects show that he was a prophet of God who received His revelations. He also had the distinction that God had revealed some of His secrets to him.

قَالَ لَهٗ مُوْسٰى هَلْ اَتَّبِعُكَ عَلٰٓى اَنْ تُعَلِّمَنِ مِمَّا عُلِّمْتَ رُشْدًا ﴿٦٦﴾ قَالَ اِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيْعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿٦٧﴾ وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلٰى مَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهٖ خُبْرًا ﴿٦٨﴾[64]

The word رُشْد means "knowledge and wisdom." However, here it means the special knowledge given to Khiḍr by the Almighty about the secrets of the universe.

Khiḍr warned Moses (sws) that since he was insisting to accompany him there will be certain things he will do that would be very abhorrent to him and he would not be able to exercise patience. They have wisdom behind them but Moses (sws) will be unaware of it.

قَالَ سَتَجِدُنِيْٓ اِنْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ صَابِرًا وَّلَآ اَعْصِيْ لَكَ اَمْرًا ﴿٦٩﴾[65]

Moses (sws) promised Khiḍr that he would stay patient and never disobey him.

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64. Moses requested him: "Can I remain with you on the condition that you teach me a little also from the knowledge given to you?" He replied: "You will not be able to be patient along with me and how at all can you be patient at what is beyond your sphere of knowledge?"

65. Moses said: "God willing, you will find me patient; I shall not disobey your directive in any matter."

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قَالَ فَاِنِ اتَّبَعْتَنِيْ فَلَا تَسْـَٔلْنِيْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ حَتّٰٓى اُحْدِثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا ﴿٧٠﴾[66]

After the commitment given by Moses (sws), Khiḍr allowed him to accompany him on the condition stated.

فَانْطَلَقَا ۫ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا رَكِبَا فِي السَّفِيْنَةِ خَرَقَهَا ۭ قَالَ اَخَرَقْتَهَا لِتُغْرِقَ اَهْلَهَا ۚ لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْـــًٔا اِمْرًا ﴿٧١﴾[67]

The word اِمْرًا means something strange and abhorrent.

قَالَ اَلَمْ اَقُلْ اِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيْعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿٧٢﴾ قَالَ لَا تُؤَاخِذْنِيْ بِمَا نَسِيْتُ وَلَا تُرْهِقْنِيْ مِنْ اَمْرِيْ عُسْرًا ﴿٧٣﴾[68]

The word إِرْهَاق means to burden someone with more than what he can bear or to inflict hardships on someone. Thus أرهقه عسرا would mean to cause difficulty for someone.

فَانْطَلَقَا ۫ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا لَقِيَا غُلٰمًا فَقَتَلَهٗ ۙ قَالَ اَقَتَلْتَ نَفْسًا زَكِيَّةًۢ بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ ۭ لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْـــًٔا نُّكْرًا ﴿٧٤﴾ قَالَ اَلَمْ اَقُلْ لَّكَ اِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيْعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿٧٥﴾ قَالَ اِنْ سَاَلْتُكَ عَنْ شَيْءٍ بَعْدَهَا فَلَا تُصٰحِبْنِيْ ۚ قَدْ بَلَغْتَ مِنْ لَّدُنِّيْ عُذْرًا ﴿٧٦﴾[69]

Once again Moses (sws) apologized for his outburst and said that next time he would stop accompanying him if does the same again.

فَانْطَلَقَا ۫ حَتّٰٓى اِذَآ اَتَيَآ اَهْلَ قَرْيَةِۨ اسْتَطْعَمَآ اَهْلَهَا فَاَبَوْا اَنْ يُّضَيِّفُوْهُمَا فَوَجَدَا فِيْهَا جِدَارًا يُّرِيْدُ اَنْ يَّنْقَضَّ فَاَقَامَهٗ ۭ قَالَ لَوْ شِئْتَ لَتَّخَذْتَ عَلَيْهِ اَجْرًا ﴿٧٧﴾ قَالَ هٰذَا فِرَاقُ بَيْنِيْ وَبَيْنِكَ ۚ سَاُنَبِّئُكَ بِتَاْوِيْلِ مَا لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ عَّلَيْهِ صَبْرًا ﴿٧٨﴾[70]

Again Moses (sws) could not restrain himself at the incident mentioned in the verse.

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66. He said: "If you have to remain with me, then it will be on the condition that you will not ask me about anything until I mention it to you myself."

67. At last, both of them set off until when they boarded a ship, that person made a hole in it. Moses said: "Have you made a hole in it that you may drown the people of the ship? This is a very strange thing that you have done!"

68. He said: "Did I not say to you that you will not be able to exercise patience along with me?" Moses said: "Do not hold me accountable for what I forgot and be not so stern with me in my matter."

69. Then both set off until when they met a boy, he killed him. Moses said: "You have slain an innocent boy even though he has not slain anyone? This is a very terrible thing that you have done." He said: "Did I not say to you that you will not be able to exercise patience along with me?" Moses said: "If after this I ask you about anything, you may not keep me with you. You would have reached an excuse from me."

70. At this, both journeyed until when they reached the inhabitants of a city, they requested their people to provide food. But they refused their hospitality. Then they saw a wall there that was about to fall. So, he erected that wall. Moses said: "If you wanted, you could have asked for some payment for it." He replied: "Now this is parting of ways between you and me. I shall now tell you the reality behind the acts on which you were not able to exercise patience. (74-78)

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Khiḍr then promptly announced the parting of ways. Concomitant indication shows that he had not declared this because the truth had been conclusively conveyed to Moses (sws); the fact was that with this third incident his education and instruction too stood completed.

اَمَّا السَّفِيۡنَةُ فَكَانَتۡ لِمَسٰكِيۡنَ يَعۡمَلُوۡنَ فِى الۡبَحۡرِ فَاَرَدۡتُّ اَنۡ اَعِيۡبَهَا وَكَانَ وَرَآءَهُمۡ مَّلِكٌ يَّاۡخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِيۡنَةٍ غَصۡبًا ﴿۷۹﴾[71]

It seems that the king was forcibly confiscating ships for most probably for a war campaign.

This is an example of the fact that if in this world the poor and the righteous are inflicted with loss, there is some underlying benefit in it from them. Hence they should remain patient and be content at God's decision. They should have conviction that none of God's decisions is devoid of wisdom; however, a person cannot fully gauge it.

وَاَمَّا الۡغُلٰمُ فَكَانَ اَبَوٰهُ مُؤۡمِنَيۡنِ فَخَشِيۡنَاۤ اَنۡ يُّرۡهِقَهُمَا طُغۡيَانًا وَّكُفۡرًا ﴿۸۰﴾ فَاَرَدۡنَاۤ اَنۡ يُّبۡدِلَهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا خَيۡرًا مِّنۡهُ زَكٰوةً وَّاَقۡرَبَ رُحۡمًا ﴿۸۱﴾[72]

The word رُحم means "affection, sympathy and concern."

The verse shows that if believers are inflicted with a calamity, there is some great benefit concealed in it for them which only God knows. Thus believers should exercise patience. When they become aware of it, they will understand God's wisdom.

وَاَمَّا الۡجِدَارُ فَكَانَ لِغُلٰمَيۡنِ يَتِيۡمَيۡنِ فِى الۡمَدِيۡنَةِ وَكَانَ تَحۡتَهٗ كَنۡزٌ لَّهُمَا وَكَانَ اَبُوۡهُمَا صَالِحًا ۚ فَاَرَادَ رَبُّكَ اَنۡ يَّبۡلُغَاۤ اَشُدَّهُمَا وَيَسۡتَخۡرِجَا كَنۡزَهُمَا ۖ رَحۡمَةً مِّنۡ رَّبِّكَ ۚ وَمَا فَعَلۡتُهٗ عَنۡ اَمۡرِىۡ ؕ ذٰلِكَ تَاۡوِيۡلُ مَا لَمۡ تَسۡطِعۡ عَّلَيۡهِ صَبۡرًا ﴿۸۲﴾[73]

At the end, Moses (sws) has clarified that none of these acts were done by him because of his own opinion.

This example shows that if the wretched and rogues are given respite in this world, the purpose is not to facilitate them in any way. The real reason is that God wants to facilitate some expediency though we are not aware of it. Through such concessions

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71. As for the ship, it belonged to some poor individuals who would earn their living in the sea. I intended to make it defective and there lived a king ahead who was snatching every ship.

72. As for the boy, his parents were people of faith. We feared that after growing up, he may be offensive to them because of rebelliousness and ingratitude. Hence We wanted that their Lord bless them with a child in his place who is purer and more affectionate than him.

73. And as for the matter of the wall, it belonged to two orphans of the city. Beneath it was their treasure, and their father was a pious person. Your Lord wanted that they reach maturity and take out their treasure themselves. This happened because of your God's grace. And all this that I did was not out of my own intention. This is the reality behind the acts on which you were not able to show patience."

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these miscreants only complete God's conclusive argument against them. However, through them God furthers the cause of the adherents of truth and it is they who are the primary purpose of the creation of this world.

Some Secondary Benefits of Verses (60-82)

We have already referred to the underlying wisdom of this anecdote of Moses (sws). However, there are some secondary benefits of this as well. They are briefly mentioned below.

Firstly, every person who seeks wisdom is not worthy of it. It is only given to its true seekers. It is not like a commodity that can be purchased from the market by everyone who has money. In fact, those who want to acquire it must work very hard for it. It is not obtained by just sitting at home; it needs a lot of effort and struggle. One must exert hard to acquire it by travelling to far off lands and by navigating oceans. There is all the possibility that all of one's life may be spent in this endeavour. One has to be possessed with a yearning to seek it while letting go of all fanfare and even sacrifice one's ego for it. A person who is not prepared for such an effort should not even embark on this journey. This huge treasure is only given by God to those who forfeit all other desires other than this desire to obtain wisdom. All these aspects are self-obvious in this anecdote and there is no need to cite arguments in their favour.

Secondly, our real guide is the *sharī'ah*. It is our obligation that we follow it in all circumstances. If we see anything against it, we must disregard it even if it is done by as great a guide as Khiḍr. Thus, readers can see that even though Khiḍr had been sent by God, Moses (sws) was never silent on anything that he saw from him against the *sharī'ah*. He was only satisfied when Khiḍr told him that whatever he did was in compliance with God's directives and nothing was done at his own initiative. Moreover, he was not merely satisfied by these explanations offered to him; in fact, he had been informed beforehand through divine revelation that Khiḍr was a special person deputed by God and whatever he will do, will be in accordance with God's directive.

For this reason, I regard as baseless the view of all those who think that there exist some Quṭub and Abdāl in every age like Khiḍr who in themselves are the yardstick of truth and falsehood; they contend that all their acts should not be judged in the scales of the sharī'ah because what they do is directly under God's will. I believe that the terms Quṭub and Abdāl have no foundation. They have no basis in the Qur'ān or Ḥadīth. However, even if it is supposed that a person belongs to these genres, how can we tolerate his acts that are against the *sharī'ah*? Moses (sws) only tolerated such acts of Khiḍr because, as is evident, he knew through divine revelation that the latter did everything at God's behest. However, what is the means through which we can know that such and such a person belongs to these genres and that he has been authorized by God to violate His *sharī'ah*. The only means we have to know God's will and

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directives is through His Book and the practice of His messenger. Thus even if Khiḍr, let alone a Quṭub or an Abdāl, comes today and kills someone on the pretext that he has done this at God's behest, his excuse shall be rejected and he will have to face execution for this crime. This is because we have the directive of *qiṣās* with us in the *sharī'ah* but nothing with us that gives him the authority to kill someone.

Thirdly, the style adopted in this anecdote creates an ambiguity and doubt in the mind of a person: on the one hand Khiḍr ascribes all his acts to God by saying: مَا فَعَلْتُهٗ عَنْ اَمْرِیْ (all this that I did was not out of my own intention); however, on the other hand, in the case of the ship, he states فَاَرَدْتُّ اَنْ اَعِیْبَهَا (so I intended to make it defective). Similarly, in the case of the boy, he uses the words فَخَشِیْنَآ (so we feared) and فَاَرَدْنَا (so we intended) and then for the wall he says: فَاَرَادَ رَبُّكَ (thus your Lord willed).

The question arises: why did he use different styles to say the same thing? When he has ascribed all his doings to God's directive, then the clear style for this was: اَرَادَ رَبُّكَ (your Lord willed). Thus in the presence of this, why did he use the words فَاَرَدْتُّ اَنْ اَعِیْبَهَا (so I intended to make it defective)? Moreover, when Khiḍr was responsible for all these acts why did he use the plural: فَاَرَدْنَا (so we intended)? If it is said that he used the plural to include God also, then the word فَخَشِیْنَآ (so we feared) is absolutely inappropriate to be used for God. Why would God have any fear? Readers may keep the following aspects in consideration to dispel these doubts.

First, when a person's will matches the will of God, he can ascribe it to God as well as to himself. The difference has much to do with the requisites of eloquence. Thus, for example, at times in deference to sound etiquette, a person should ascribe an act to his own self instead of God. Thus making a hole in the ship is something which is inappropriate in its apparent form was attributed to Khiḍr to himself for this reason. On the other hand, since preserving the treasure of the orphans is something virtuous even in its apparent form, it was attributed by him directly to God.

Second, when on such an instances, a speaker uses the plural, he represents the statement of all members of the category that he stands for or is their instrument of implementation. Since Khiḍr had done all these acts as someone who implements God's will in this universe, he could have used the plural for this. This made his act the act of all those who implement God's will.

Third, the word فَخَشِیْنَآ (so we feared) used here by Khiḍr is not in relation to God. It has been used by him to show that he had exercised his own opinion. He was informed through an angel or through divine revelation that he should kill a certain boy because his parents are true believers and he will grow up to become a wretched disbeliever. Through this directive, he himself deduced that this boy will commit excesses against his parents and for this reason he has been asked to kill him. This reason was not specified in the divine relation he received. Thus he expressed it as his own fear.

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Section VI: Verses (83-98)

In the succeeding verses, an answer to a question raised about Dhū al-Qarnayn is raised. It must have been posed by the Jews and their purpose must have been the same as what we have explained under the anecdote of the cave-sleepers: to make the Prophet (sws) anxious and worrisome and to implant hurdles in the path of the true call. However, they did not pose it directly. They must have used the Quraysh for this purpose. The fact that it is probable that the Jews had raised it is because they were deeply interested in Dhū al-Qarnayn. They regarded him to be their benefactor king, as will be seen from later details. He is also mentioned in the scriptures of their prophets. In spite of knowing their miscreant nature, the Qur'ān has only answered their question because the life of Dhū al-Qarnayn could have offered a lesson of life to these arrogant slaves of worldly desires who have been under discussion since the beginning of this *sūrah* right up to its end.

Who was this Dhū al-Qarnayn? Our exegetes have expressed different views in this regard. Generally, he has been regarded to be Alexander. Some regard him to be Cyrus or Darius, who were Persian kings. According to another opinion, this title refers to a king among the Ḥimyar dynasty. There is no argument worthy of mention in favour of this opinion. The attributes mentioned by Qur'ān also do not apply to Alexander. He is mentioned as a staunch monotheist, an ardent believer of the hereafter and a very just ruler who deeply cared about his subjects. None of these qualities existed in Alexander. The extent of his conquests is also not as wide as mentioned for Dhū al-Qarnayn. Moreover, there is no argument to support this title for Alexander. There are certain conquests notched up by Darius in the East and the West. However, in this regard, his status is not that of a pioneer. He only consolidated the empire established by Cyrus.

However, there are numerous aspects of Cyrus' personality because of which he can be regarded as Dhū al-Qarnayn. He was a man of faith and a very just ruler whose magnanimity has been praised by both old and new historians. The Qur'ān has mentioned three of his campaigns, out which two that were in the eastern and western directions are verified by history. Though historians do not say anything with certainty about the third campaign, yet there are signs and indications in its support as well.

A great favour of this king done to the Jews was that he had liberated them from their slavery in Babylon and by his help the Temple was once again built. Jewish prophets had also prophesied about him. In the Book of Isaiah it is written:

> This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armour. (45:1)

In vision showed to the Prophet Daniel, it is written:

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I looked up, and there before me was a ram with two horns, standing beside the canal, and the horns were long. One of the horns was longer than the other but grew up later. I watched the ram as it charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against it, and none could rescue from its power. It did as it pleased and became great. (8:3-4)

Gabriel explained this vision to Daniel by saying that the two horns refer to the two kingdoms of Media and Persia which will be conquered by this promised king. It is established that Cyrus did humble both these kingdoms and for this reason he has been called Dhū al-Qarnayn (one having two horns). One of his statues has been discovered in recent times in Estakhr, an ancient city of Persia. It was built in the time of Ardashir 1 (d. 242 AD). Two horns emerging from his crown can be seen in it. It may well be that they are etched to portray his majesty and power or it may be because of these two conquests referred to above.

Readers may not study these verses in the light of this background.

Text and Translation

وَيَسْـَٔلُوْنَكَ عَنْ ذِى الْقَرْنَيْنِ ؕ قُلْ سَاَتْلُوْا عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنْهُ ذِكْرًا ﴿۸۳﴾ اِنَّا مَكَّنَّا لَهٗ فِى الْاَرْضِ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُ مِنْ كُلِّ
شَىْءٍ سَبَبًا ﴿۸۴﴾ فَاَتْبَعَ سَبَبًا ﴿۸۵﴾ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا بَلَغَ مَغْرِبَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا تَغْرُبُ فِىْ عَيْنٍ حَمِئَةٍ وَّوَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا
قَوْمًا ؕ قُلْنَا يٰذَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ اِمَّآ اَنْ تُعَذِّبَ وَاِمَّآ اَنْ تَتَّخِذَ فِيْهِمْ حُسْنًا ﴿۸۶﴾ قَالَ اَمَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ فَسَوْفَ نُعَذِّبُهٗ
ثُمَّ يُرَدُّ اِلٰى رَبِّهٖ فَيُعَذِّبُهٗ عَذَابًا نُّكْرًا ﴿۸۷﴾ وَاَمَّا مَنْ اٰمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهٗ جَزَآءَ ۨ الْحُسْنٰى ۚ وَسَنَقُوْلُ لَهٗ مِنْ
اَمْرِنَا يُسْرًا ﴿۸۸﴾ ثُمَّ اَتْبَعَ سَبَبًا ﴿۸۹﴾ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا بَلَغَ مَطْلِعَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا تَطْلُعُ عَلٰى قَوْمٍ لَّمْ نَجْعَلْ لَّهُمْ
مِّنْ دُوْنِهَا سِتْرًا ﴿۹۰﴾ كَذٰلِكَ ؕ وَقَدْ اَحَطْنَا بِمَا لَدَيْهِ خُبْرًا ﴿۹۱﴾ ثُمَّ اَتْبَعَ سَبَبًا ﴿۹۲﴾ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا بَلَغَ بَيْنَ السَّدَّيْنِ
وَجَدَ مِنْ دُوْنِهِمَا قَوْمًا ۙ لَّا يَكَادُوْنَ يَفْقَهُوْنَ قَوْلًا ﴿۹۳﴾ قَالُوْا يٰذَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ اِنَّ يَاْجُوْجَ وَمَاْجُوْجَ مُفْسِدُوْنَ فِى
الْاَرْضِ فَهَلْ نَجْعَلُ لَكَ خَرْجًا عَلٰٓى اَنْ تَجْعَلَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُمْ سَدًّا ﴿۹۴﴾ قَالَ مَا مَكَّنِّىْ فِيْهِ رَبِّىْ خَيْرٌ
فَاَعِيْنُوْنِىْ بِقُوَّةٍ اَجْعَلْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ رَدْمًا ﴿۹۵﴾ اٰتُوْنِىْ زُبَرَ الْحَدِيْدِ ؕ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا سَاوٰى بَيْنَ الصَّدَفَيْنِ قَالَ
انْفُخُوْا ؕ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا جَعَلَهٗ نَارًا ۙ قَالَ اٰتُوْنِىْٓ اُفْرِغْ عَلَيْهِ قِطْرًا ﴿۹۶﴾ فَمَا اسْطَاعُوْٓا اَنْ يَّظْهَرُوْهُ وَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوْا لَهٗ
نَقْبًا ﴿۹۷﴾ قَالَ هٰذَا رَحْمَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّىْ ۚ فَاِذَا جَآءَ وَعْدُ رَبِّىْ جَعَلَهٗ دَكَّآءَ ۚ وَكَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّىْ حَقًّا ﴿۹۸﴾

And they ask you about Dhū al-Qarnayn. Tell them: I shall narrate to you some of his account from which a lesson can be learnt. We had given him great authority in the

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land and had blessed him with means and resources of all kinds. Thus once he prepared for an expedition until he reached the place where the sun sets. He saw it as if it was setting in a black fountain. And he found a nation near it. We said: "O Dhū al-Qarnayn! It is up to you whether you punish them or treat them kindly." He replied: "The oppressive among them we shall punish as well. Then he will also be returned to his Lord and He shall sternly punish him. As for he who embraces faith and does righteous deeds, for him in return is a good reward also with his Lord and We too shall gently deal with him." (83-88)

Then he prepared for another expedition until when he reached the place where the sun rises, he saw that it was rising on a nation for which We had placed no barrier against the sun. This is precisely what We did and We were fully aware about his whereabouts. (89-91)

He then prepared for another expedition until he reached a pass between two mountains. He found in this pass between the two mountains people who could not understand anything. They requested: "O Dhū al-Qarnayn! Gog and Magog keep spreading disorder in this land; so, is it possible that if we arrange expenses for you and you make a wall between us and them?" He replied: "Whatever my Lord has given in my control is sufficient. You may however help me with your might. I shall construct a barrier between you and them. Bring me slabs of iron." When he filled the gap in between the two mountains, he ordered: "Blow!" Until when he made it into fire, he commanded: "Bring me some brass that I may pour over it." Thus they could neither climb it now nor create a fissure in it. He said: "This is my Lord's blessing. Then my Lord's promise is fulfilled, He shall level it to the ground and certain is the promise of my Lord." (92-98)

Explanation

وَيَسْـَٔلُونَكَ عَنْ ذِى الْقَرْنَيْنِ ۖ قُلْ سَاَتْلُوْا عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنْهُ ذِكْرًا ﴿٨٣﴾[74]

It seems that the title of Dhū al-Qarnayn was given to Cyrus by the Jews of Arabia. A sort of appeal exists in سَاَتْلُوْا. The implication is: "If you ask, I shall narrate to you a part of his anecdote; hopefully you will listen to it intently and benefit from it." The meaning of reminding and learning a lesson found in the word ذِكْرًا is not hidden from the eyes of those who have a flair for language.

إِنَّا مَكَّنَّا لَهُ فِى الْاَرْضِ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ سَبَبًا ﴿٨٤﴾[75]

The actual meaning of the word سَبَبٌ is "means." Here its usage in the word means

74. And they ask you about Dhū al-Qarnayn. Tell them: I shall narrate to you some of his account from which a lesson can be learnt.

75. We had given him great authority in the land and had blessed him with means and resources of all kinds.

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that his kingdom had means and resources of all kind.

Regarding Cyrus it may however be kept in mind here that in the middle of 6th century BC, he was appointed the governor of a small kingdom called Anshan of his father Cambyses. As soon as he came to power, he had to fight the ruler of Media and earned a huge victory. In the remaining few years, he conquered all great kingdoms of those times and ruled from Balkh and Makran to the Roman sea. Before this, no kingdom of such expanse and splendour had been founded.

فَاَتۡبَعَ سَبَبًا ﴿۸۵﴾[76]

The word اَتۡبَاعَ means "to get after and pursue something." The expression فَاَتۡبَعَ سَبَبًا would mean "he evaluated the means and resources and arranged for them." From here it came to be used to imply the wider meaning of preparing for a campaign or an expedition.

حَتّٰۤی اِذَا بَلَغَ مَغۡرِبَ الشَّمۡسِ وَجَدَهَا تَغۡرُبُ فِیۡ عَیۡنٍ حَمِئَةٍ وَّوَجَدَ عِنۡدَهَا قَوۡمًا ؕ قُلۡنَا یٰذَا الۡقَرۡنَیۡنِ اِمَّاۤ اَنۡ تُعَذِّبَ وَاِمَّاۤ اَنۡ تَتَّخِذَ فِیۡهِمۡ حُسۡنًا ﴿۸۶﴾[77]

The expression مَغۡرِبَ الشَّمۡسِ implies that he reached the sea shore in the west. Here the words "He saw it as if it was setting in a black fountain" mean that all known world of the west in the times of Dhū al-Qarnayn came under his sway. Now only the ocean lied ahead. It was as if this was the furthermost part of the land inhabited in the west and it was here that the sun would set.

This is a reference to the first expedition of Cyrus which took place towards the west of his capital city Ecbatana (present day Hamadan). In this campaign, he conquered Media (present day Iraq and Syria) and Lydia (present day Turkey). He defeated Croesus, the ruler of Lydia in his capital Sardis (Samarna) and who had support of the rulers of Babylon, Egypt and Sparta. In this campaign, he reached the shores of the Roman sea.

The word قول is also used to imply a situation, an attitude or authority. In other words, as a result of this campaign, the subjects he gained were made to submit to his authority in such a way by the Almighty that if he wanted he could punish them or treat them with kindness. None could interfere with his power and authority. It does not mean that the Almighty had verbally told him that he if he wanted he could be unjust or just. It was his discretion. The only right he had was to be just and kind. This is the divinely ordained duty of every ruler. However, he also has the freedom to be

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76. Thus once he prepared for an expedition.

77. Until he reached the place where the sun sets. He saw it as if it was setting in a black fountain. And he found a nation near it. We said: "O Dhū al-Qarnayn! It is up to you whether you punish them or treat them kindly."

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oppressive. If he administers justice, he will be rewarded from God and if he is unjust, he will be punished. The real guidance for a ruler is the one which the Almighty has given by addressing David (sws) thus:

يٰدَاوٗدُ اِنَّا جَعَلْنٰكَ خَلِيْفَةً فِي الْاَرْضِ فَاحْكُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوٰى فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَضِلُّوْنَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيْدٌۢ بِمَا نَسُوْا يَوْمَ الْحِسَابِ (٣٨: ٢٦)

O David! We have made you a caliph in the land. So, deal with justice among people and you must not yield to your desire, lest it turn you away from God's path. Those who stray from the path of God shall be sternly punished because they became unmindful of the Day of Reckoning. (38:26)

In the verse under discussion, the nature of address with Dhu al-Qarnayn is the same as one with Solomon (sws) in the following verse:

هٰذَا عَطَآؤُنَا فَامْنُنْ اَوْ اَمْسِكْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ (٣٨:٣٩)

All this is Our bestowal uncountable. So, if you want, you can be kind to people or withhold your kindness. (38:39)

Obviously, these words only express the freedom to exercise their will which people have. A person can either profess belief or disbelief. Similarly, he also has the freedom to be kind and generous after receiving God's favours or become stingy. He has the liberty adopt either attitude. However, in the eyes of God, only one of them is pleasing and it is that what He has demanded from people.

قَالَ اَمَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ فَسَوْفَ نُعَذِّبُهٗ ثُمَّ يُرَدُّ اِلٰى رَبِّهٖ فَيُعَذِّبُهٗ عَذَابًا نُّكْرًا ﴿٨٧﴾ وَاَمَّا مَنْ اٰمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهٗ جَزَآءَ ۨ الْحُسْنٰى ۚ وَسَنَقُوْلُ لَهٗ مِنْ اَمْرِنَا يُسْرًا ﴿٨٨﴾[78]

Just as the previous statement is the portrayal of a situation, the statement of this verse expresses practice. In other words, Dhu al-Qarnayn bore witness through his attitude and behaviour that he who takes to oppression and anarchy will be punished by him and will receive a sterner punishment in the hereafter. However, those who have faith and do righteous deeds will be worthy of a wonderful fate in the hereafter and in this world Dhu al-Qarnayn too would treat them kindly.

To portray an attitude or practice through the word **قول** is a common Arabic style. The words of the Jews cited in verse 93 of Sūrah al-Baqarah: قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا (They

78. He replied: "The oppressive among them we shall punish as well. Then he will also be returned to his Lord and He shall sternly punish him. As for he who embraces faith and does righteous deeds, for him in return is a good reward also with his Lord and We too shall gently deal with him."

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said: we listened and we disobeyed) are actually a portrayal of their attitude. In the verse under discussion, the words سَنَقُوْلُ لَهٗ مِنْ اَمْرِنَا يُسْرًا (we too shall gently deal with him) also similarly portray attitude. Some people merely because of the earlier words قُلْنَا in verse 86 and قَالَ of verse 87 regard Dhū al-Qarnayn to be a prophet. However, in my opinion, this is not reason enough to regard him to be a prophet. Yet these verses as well as history do vouch for him being a just and compassionate ruler.

Historians write that the army of Cyrus never harmed the inhabitants of any of the cities it conquered. Cyrus was very kind to his conquered subjects. He relieved them of all taxes and tributes. He forgave the staunchest of his enemies when they were brought before him. They were so impressed by his kindness that they became very loyal to him. The ruler of Media was kept by him in his palace until his death and was even granted ten thousand infantry men and five thousand riders by him. In this way, he kept intact his royal stature.

Also evident from these verses is that Dhū al-Qarnayn was a real monotheist who had conviction in the hereafter. History also corroborates these facts. Cyrus was a contemporary of Zoroaster and also his follower. Found in the real teachings of Zoroaster are concepts of belief in God and in the Hereafter. However, like other religions, later this religion too became distorted at the hands of its followers. In fact, it was deeply influenced by Dualism. In his tablets, Dara expresses gratitude to Ahura Mazda (God) and attributes his kingdom to His graciousness. He even asks Ahura Mazda the urge and help to keep his kingdom on the right path. Obviously, he inherited his religiosity from Dhū al-Qarnayn. The latter also had great regard for the prophets of the Israelites. This too contributed in strengthening religious inclinations in him.

ثُمَّ اَتْبَعَ سَبَبًا ﴿٨٩﴾ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا بَلَغَ مَطْلِعَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا تَطْلُعُ عَلٰى قَوْمٍ لَّمْ نَجْعَلْ لَّهُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِهَا سِتْرًا ﴿٩٠﴾[79]

This is a mention of the second expedition of Cyrus. It is evident from the words بَلَغَ مَطْلِعَ الشَّمْسِ that it took place towards the east. Here too, he reached its farthest limits. According to historians, the reason for this expedition was the rebelliousness of the tribes of Makran, Qandahar and Balkh. They had created disorder at the eastern border of Persia. Ultimately, Dhū al-Qarnayn had to silence this uprising and he conquered all these territories. The words "a nation for which We had placed no barrier against the sun" signify how uncivilized and uncultured these tribes were. It seems that they were not familiar with craft of building houses and were very unrefined.

79. Then he prepared for another expedition until when he reached the place where the sun rises, he saw that it was rising on a nation for which We had placed no barrier against the sun.

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كَذٰلِكَ ۚ وَقَدْ اَحَطْنَا بِمَا لَدَيْهِ خُبْرًا ﴿٩١﴾[80]

This verse has exactly the same occasion and context as verse 51 of Sūrah al-Anbiyā': وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَآ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ رُشْدَهٗ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا بِهٖ عٰلِمِيْنَ.[81] This verse while pointing out the wisdom of blessing Abraham (sws) with guidance and with political authority says that God knew him very well. In other words, if God blessed Abraham (sws) in this manner, it was because He knew his capabilities which made him worthy of these blessings. In a similar way, in the verse under discussion, while pointing to the victories of Dhū al-Qarnayn he gained as a result of God's blessing, it is stated that fully present in him were the abilities and traits needed to govern this huge kingdom and God was fully aware of them.

ثُمَّ اَتْبَعَ سَبَبًا ﴿٩٢﴾ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا بَلَغَ بَيْنَ السَّدَّيْنِ وَجَدَ مِنْ دُوْنِهِمَا قَوْمًا ۙ لَّا يَكَادُوْنَ يَفْقَهُوْنَ قَوْلًا ﴿٩٣﴾ قَالُوْا يٰذَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ اِنَّ يَاْجُوْجَ وَمَاْجُوْجَ مُفْسِدُوْنَ فِى الْاَرْضِ فَهَلْ نَجْعَلُ لَكَ خَرْجًا عَلٰٓى اَنْ تَجْعَلَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُمْ سَدًّا ﴿٩٤﴾ قَالَ مَا مَكَّنِّىْ فِيْهِ رَبِّىْ خَيْرٌ فَاَعِيْنُوْنِىْ بِقُوَّةٍ اَجْعَلْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ رَدْمًا ﴿٩٥﴾ اٰتُوْنِىْ زُبَرَ الْحَدِيْدِ ۭ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا سَاوٰى بَيْنَ الصَّدَفَيْنِ قَالَ انْفُخُوْا ۭ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا جَعَلَهٗ نَارًا ۙ قَالَ اٰتُوْنِىْٓ اُفْرِغْ عَلَيْهِ قِطْرًا ﴿٩٦﴾ فَمَا اسْطَاعُوْٓا اَنْ يَّظْهَرُوْهُ وَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوْا لَهٗ نَقْبًا ﴿٩٧﴾ قَالَ هٰذَا رَحْمَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّىْ ۚ فَاِذَا جَاۗءَ وَعْدُ رَبِّىْ جَعَلَهٗ دَكَّاۗءَ ۚ وَكَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّىْ حَقًّا ﴿٩٨﴾[82]

This is a mention of the third expedition of Cyrus. Historians have not mentioned it anywhere. However, they do record this much that he undertook a journey towards the north east after he conquered Babylon. Perhaps his destination was towards Turkey in the east of the Caspian sea. It was during this journey that he fell in a pit and died. It seems that it was during this journey that the incident of constructing the dam mentioned here took place.

This dam, as referred to by the Qur'ān, was constructed to ward off the onslaughts of Gog and Magog. They refer to the progeny of Japeth son of Noah (sws) which inhabited the northern areas of Asia. Hezkiel states:

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80. This is precisely what We did and We were fully aware about his whereabouts.

81. And before this, We gave Abraham his share of guidance and We knew him very well.

82. He then prepared for another expedition until he reached a pass between two mountains. He found in this pass between the two mountains people who could not understand anything. They requested: "O Dhū al-Qarnayn! Gog and Magog keep spreading disorder in this land; so, is it possible that if we arrange expenses for you and you make a wall between us and them?" He replied: "Whatever my Lord has given in my control is sufficient. You may however help me with your might. I shall construct a barrier between you and them. Bring me slabs of iron." When he filled the gap in between the two mountains, he ordered: "Blow!" Until when he made it into fire, he commanded: "Bring me some brass that I may pour over it." Thus they could neither climb it now nor create a fissure in it. He said: "This is my Lord's blessing. Then my Lord's promise is fulfilled, He shall level it to the ground and certain is the promise of my Lord."

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The word of the LORD came to me: Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshek and Tubal; prophesy against him. (38:1-2)

Son of man, prophesy against Gog and say: This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against you, Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshek and Tubal. I will turn you around and drag you along. I will bring you from the far north. (39:1-2)

Rosh, Meshek and Tubal today exist as Russia, Moscow and Tubalsac and these areas are in the far off regions to the south of Palestine. The tribes of Gog and Magog lived towards the south of the Caspian sea in Central Asia in the land of Mongolia. They attacked Persia from both Turkey and from the Caucasian pass. Caucasia was situated directly in the south of the capital city of Cyrus. Thus it may well be that Cyrus actually filled this pass to ward off their onslaughts.

In the pass of Daryal in Caucasia exists an iron wall even today. Travellers and tourists have also mentioned it in their travelogues. It is stated in historical chronicles that Wathiq the Abbasid caliph deputed a team of fifty thousand people to find out its whereabouts. People ascribe this wall to Dara or to Nausherwan. However, stronger evidence indicates that it was constructed by Cyrus. For example, it is now established that the southern boundary of Cyrus' empire extended to Caucasia. Such a large territory under control is only possible if it had been conquered by him. A city and a river by the name of Koresh still exits in Caucasia. The iron wall is called Gora which seems to be a distorted form of Koresh. This wall has been made by a metal between two mountains. Space has been left in its lower part for rain water to escape.

The words "people who could not understand anything" show that these people had no interaction with other nations. They had isolated themselves in this land. As a result, they could not understand the tongue of others.

The word قُوَّة in verse 95 refers to manpower. The implication is that out of generosity Dhū al-Qarnayn did not accept the offer of resources made by his subjects; he however asked them to provide manpower. His words "whatever my Lord has given in my control is sufficient" refer to the fact that not only is the wealth he has is enough, it is also clean; it was never earned through loot and plunder.

In verse 96, the word زبر is the plural of زبرة. It means "iron slabs." The word صدف means "space and covering." It is used in its dual form صدفين to indicate both borders much like the usage in Sūrah al-Raḥmān (55:17) of the words مشرقين (both borders of the east) and مغربين (both borders of the west). The purpose is to convey the fact that the space between both mountains was filled.

The word دَكَّاءَ actually refers to the hump of a camel. Here it means to flatten and level down. The implication of verse 98 is that when such a huge iron and robust wall had been erected that Gog and Magog could not even climb it nor create any fissure in

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it, Dhū al-Qarnayn did not express any arrogance. He did not say like these haughty leaders of the Quraysh that he had accomplished a feat that will be an abiding one. On the contrary, he humbly said that the service he had done was merely due to his Lord's blessing: today this wall may be unassailable but when the time of manifestation of his Lord's promise comes, it will be razed to ground by Him and that his Lord's promise is certain to materialize.

Earlier in verse 32-36, readers have read the in parable of two individuals. The mentality of one of them was inflicted with arrogance: when he entered enter his lush orchard, he would haughtily say that he does not think that it will ever be destroyed. After this, here the example of a grateful servant of God is cited: he was thankful to his Lord for one his greatest accomplishments and remembered His certain promise

Section VII: Verses (99-110)

Coming up are the closing verses of the *sūrah*. They begin with a very eloquent digression. At the end of the last section, Dhū al-Qarnayn seeing the majestic dam had expressed that when the time of manifestation of His Lord's promise arrives, this huge structure would be decimated. Taking cue from this, the Almighty made it a means of reminding people of this promise and admonishing the slaves of this world. In fact, the topic of warning with which the *sūrah* began has come up again in a new style. I have pointed out on numerous occasions this trait of the Qur'ān's coherence that *sūrahs* generally end with the same topic with which they begin. This *sūrah* follows the same pattern too.

Readers may now study these verses in this light of this background.

Text and Translation

وَ تَرَكْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَّمُوْجُ فِيْ بَعْضٍ وَّ نُفِخَ فِي الصُّوْرِ فَجَمَعْنٰهُمْ جَمْعًا ﴿٩٩﴾ وَّ عَرَضْنَا جَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ
لِّلْكٰفِرِيْنَ عَرْضًا ﴿١٠٠﴾ الَّذِيْنَ كَانَتْ اَعْيُنُهُمْ فِيْ غِطَآءٍ عَنْ ذِكْرِيْ وَ كَانُوْا لَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ سَمْعًا ﴿١٠١﴾ اَفَحَسِبَ
الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اَنْ يَّتَّخِذُوْا عِبَادِيْ مِنْ دُوْنِيْٓ اَوْلِيَآءَ ؕ اِنَّآ اَعْتَدْنَا جَهَنَّمَ لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ نُزُلًا ﴿١٠٢﴾ قُلْ هَلْ
نُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِالْاَخْسَرِيْنَ اَعْمَالًا ﴿١٠٣﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ ضَلَّ سَعْيُهُمْ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَ هُمْ يَحْسَبُوْنَ اَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُوْنَ
صُنْعًا ﴿١٠٤﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَ لِقَآئِهٖ فَحَبِطَتْ اَعْمَالُهُمْ فَلَا نُقِيْمُ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ وَزْنًا ﴿١٠٥﴾
ذٰلِكَ جَزَآؤُهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ بِمَا كَفَرُوْا وَ اتَّخَذُوْٓا اٰيٰتِيْ وَ رُسُلِيْ هُزُوًا ﴿١٠٦﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَ عَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ كَانَتْ
لَهُمْ جَنّٰتُ الْفِرْدَوْسِ نُزُلًا ﴿١٠٧﴾ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا لَا يَبْغُوْنَ عَنْهَا حِوَلًا ﴿١٠٨﴾ قُلْ لَّوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَادًا لِّكَلِمٰتِ رَبِّيْ

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لَنَفِدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ اَنْ تَنْفَدَ كَلِمٰتُ رَبِّیْ وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهٖ مَدَدًا ﴿۱۰۹﴾ قُلْ اِنَّمَآ اَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ یُوْحٰۤی اِلَیَّ اَنَّمَآ اِلٰهُكُمْ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ ۚ فَمَنْ كَانَ یَرْجُوْا لِقَآءَ رَبِّهٖ فَلْیَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَّلَا یُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهٖۤ اَحَدًا ﴿۱۱۰﴾

And on that day, We shall leave them so that they shall be striking one another like waves do, and the trumpet shall be sounded. Thus We shall gather all of them and on that day, We shall bring forth Hell before those disbelievers whose eyes were covered from Our warning and they were not able to listen. (99-101)

Do these disbelievers think that they will make My servants to be their guardian except Me? We have prepared Hell for the hospitality of the disbelievers. (102)

Say: Should We inform you who the greatest losers are with regard to their deeds? Those people all of whose efforts were wasted while going after the life of the world while they thought that they were doing very noble deeds. It is these people who denied their Lord's revelations as well as meeting Him. Thus their deeds went waste and on the Day of Judgment, We shall not give them the slightest weight. Their reward is this Hell because they have disbelieved and have made fun of My revelations and My messengers. (103-106)

Indeed those who accepted faith and did righteous deeds, for them is the hospitality of the orchards of Paradise where they shall abide forever; they shall never want to leave that place. (107-108)

Say: If the sea becomes ink to write down the signs of my Lord, the sea would run dry before the signs of my Lord run out even if We add to it another similar sea. (109)

Say: I am only a human being like you. I receive the revelation that your God is only one God. Thus he who is hopeful of meeting his Lord should do righteous deeds and not associate anyone in worshipping his Lord. (110)

Explanation

وَتَرَكْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ یَوْمَىِٕذٍ یَّمُوْجُ فِیْ بَعْضٍ وَّنُفِخَ فِی الصُّوْرِ فَجَمَعْنٰهُمْ جَمْعًا ﴿۹۹﴾[83]

By connecting this verse to the statement of Dhū al-Qarnayn mentioned in the last verse "then my Lord's promise is fulfilled, He shall level it to the ground and certain is the promise of my Lord" the signs of the arrival of the Day of Judgement are further explained. It is evident from the verse under discussion that the borders between seas and mountains will all go away one day and nations will crash into one another the way sea waves do. Science has already gotten rid of the barriers between the seas and mountains; however, it seems that when judgement day arrives whatever remains of these barriers will also become meaningless. It is evident from this verse and from verse 96 of Sūrah al-Anbiyā'[84] that near the Day of Judgement, the progeny of Japeth

83. And on that day, We shall leave them so that they shall be striking one another like waves do, and the trumpet shall be sounded. Thus We shall gather all of them

84. Until that time arrives when Gog and Magog are let loose and they launch an onslaught

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will prevail over the rest of the world like a storm and then from within this storm the Day of Judgement will appear. Though these things belong to the category of the *mutashābihāt* and their exact nature is only known to the knower of the unknown, yet one cannot close one's eyes to its signs that are now appearing in this world.

The emphasis of جَمْعًا in فَجَمَعْنٰهُمْ جَمْعًا shows that the trumpet will gather every single soul: small or great, rich or poor, present or absent, worshippers and the worshipped – all of them.

وَّعَرَضْنَا جَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْكٰفِرِيْنَ عَرْضًا ﴿١٠٠﴾[85]

The verse implies that today these intellectually blind people do not foresee Hell but on that day they will see it with their very eyes.

الَّذِيْنَ كَانَتْ اَعْيُنُهُمْ فِيْ غِطَآءٍ عَنْ ذِكْرِيْ وَكَانُوْا لَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ سَمْعًا ﴿١٠١﴾[86]

This verse describes that so intellectually deprived were these people that none of the prophetic reminders could open their eyes and when God's warnings were sounded to them, they could not bear them.

اَفَحَسِبَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اَنْ يَّتَّخِذُوْا عِبَادِيْ مِنْ دُوْنِيْٓ اَوْلِيَآءَ ۭ اِنَّآ اَعْتَدْنَا جَهَنَّمَ لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ نُزُلًا ﴿١٠٢﴾[87]

A warning is sounded to these wretched people in this verse.

قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِالْاَخْسَرِيْنَ اَعْمَالًا ﴿١٠٣﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ ضَلَّ سَعْيُهُمْ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُوْنَ اَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُوْنَ صُنْعًا ﴿١٠٤﴾ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَلِقَاۗىِٕهٖ فَحَبِطَتْ اَعْمَالُهُمْ فَلَا نُقِيْمُ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ وَزْنًا ﴿١٠٥﴾ ذٰلِكَ جَزَاۗؤُهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ بِمَا كَفَرُوْا وَاتَّخَذُوْٓا اٰيٰتِيْ وَرُسُلِيْ هُزُوًا ﴿١٠٦﴾[88]

These verses strike a blow at the arrogance of these people. Today they regard themselves to be superior but on the Day of Judgement they will become insignificant. They haughtily made fun of God's revelations and now they will taste the flavour of

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from every high place.

85. And on that day, We shall bring forth Hell before those disbelievers.

86. Whose eyes were covered from Our warning and they were not able to listen

87. Do these disbelievers think that they will make My servants to be their guardian except Me? We have prepared Hell for the hospitality of the disbelievers.

88. Say: Should We inform you who the greatest losers are with regard to their deeds? Those people all of whose efforts were wasted while going after the life of the world while they thought that they were doing very noble deeds. It is these people who denied their Lord's revelations as well as meeting Him. Thus their deeds went waste and on the Day of Judgment, We shall not give them any weight. Their reward is this Hell because they have disbelieved and have made fun of My revelations and My messengers.

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Hell as a consequence.

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَنّٰتُ الْفِرْدَوْسِ نُزُلًا ﴿١٠٧﴾ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا لَا يَبْغُوْنَ عَنْهَا حِوَلًا ﴿١٠٨﴾[89]

This verse states the reward of those who accepted faith and did righteous deeds.

قُلْ لَّوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَادًا لِّكَلِمٰتِ رَبِّيْ لَنَفِدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ اَنْ تَنْفَدَ كَلِمٰتُ رَبِّيْ وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهٖ مَدَدًا ﴿١٠٩﴾[90]

The word كَلِمٰت refers to the signs of God's power and wisdom found scattered within human beings as well as outside them. This verse is a response to the arrogant who would make fun of the Qur'ān and demand a miracle to be shown to them. In Sūrah Luqmān, an even stronger response is given. What is stated is the exact truth and no exaggeration at all. If the sea wants to write all its signs and miracles, its ink will not be sufficient for it. However, these signs can only be seen by those who have eyes.

قُلْ اِنَّمَآ اَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوْحٰٓى اِلَيَّ اَنَّمَآ اِلٰهُكُمْ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ ۚ فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوْا لِقَآءَ رَبِّهٖ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَّلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهٖٓ اَحَدًا ﴿١١٠﴾[91]

The verse asks the Prophet (sws) to tell these people that showing signs is the prerogative of God. He is only God's envy who recites divine revelations that He sends to him. The Prophet (sws) should tell them that he has never claimed to be God so that he should fulfil their demand of showing a miracle.

This completes the explanation of this *sūrah*. May God forgive our blemishes and open our hearts to the truth. وَاٰخِرُ دَعْوٰىهُمْ اَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ (and our last statement is: all gratitude be to God, the Lord of the worlds).

Lahore,
27th October 1972

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89. Indeed those who have accepted faith and have done righteous deeds, for them is the hospitality of the orchards of Paradise where they shall abide forever; they shall never want to leave that place.

90. Say: If the sea becomes ink to write down the signs of my Lord, the sea would run dry before the signs of my Lord run out even if We add to it another similar sea.

91. Say: I am only a human being like you. I receive the revelation that your God is only one God. Thus he who is hopeful of meeting his Lord should do righteous deeds and not associate anyone in worshipping his Lord.

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Sūrah Maryam

Theme and Relationship with the Previous Sūrah

This *sūrah* is the counterpart of Sūrah al-Kahf as it forms a pair with it. There is not much difference between the themes of both *sūrahs*; the same topic is discussed in them though the style of reasoning and manner of narration is different. In this *sūrah*, it is stated that all celebrated prophets born in the progeny of Adam (sws), Noah (sws) and Abraham (sws) preached monotheism. They directed their followers to offer the prayer and pay *zakāh*. However, these followers got incriminated with polytheism, obliterated both these rituals and succumbed to religious innovations and personal desires. Now that they are being invited to their real religion, they have become its enemies. On the other hand, the Prophet (sws) is urged to show perseverance on their attitude and given glad tidings of success. At the end, the real reason for the deviant beliefs of the adversaries is pointed out: they regard their worldly successes in contrast to the believers to be a reason of their own veracity. The fact is that this is not correct; it is a respite given to them from God so that the truth is conclusively communicated to them and when they are seized they have no excuse.

In this *sūrah*, Jesus (sws) and Mary (sws) are prominently mentioned. As pointed out in the previous *sūrah*, the reason for this is that in those times like the Jews, the Christians too had begun to secretly support the Quraysh. This support by the People of the Book reinforced the Quraysh immensely. The reason for this was that because of being unlettered in religion, the Arabs held the People of the Book in esteem. When they saw that they too have the same opinion, their spirits were greatly boosted. In order to dent this influence of the People of the Book, the Qur'ān exposed them. Thus earlier in Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl the baselessness of the Jews is fully brought out. In this *sūrah*, the same treatment is meted out to the Christians. The purpose is to let the Quraysh know that how can those who themselves have no foundation be of any support to them in this conflict between truth and falsehood.

Analysis

Verses (1-15): The *sūrah* begins with the supplication of Zacharias (sws) before God to grant him a son in spite of his old age and the infertility of his wife. It was accepted by God and he was given glad tidings of the birth of John (sws). This incident forms a prelude to the anecdote of Mary (sws) mentioned subsequently. The Christians regarded the miraculous birth of Jesus (sws) to be a proof of his divinity. The Qur'ān

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here by mentioning the birth of John (sws) has shown that if a mere miraculous birth is enough to prove the divinity of Jesus (sws), then this proof is also present in favour of John (sws). He too was born from an old father and an infertile mother. Yet he himself never claimed divinity nor did anyone else try to regard him to be god. Moreover, it is Zacharias (sws) who trained and brought up Mary (sws), the mother of Jesus (sws), and if in accordance with Christian beliefs, John (sws) baptized Jesus (sws) how did he become son of God.

Verses (16-36): The pure and noble life led by Mary (sws) is referred to. The details of how Jesus (sws) was born to her are mentioned. Thereafter how Jesus (sws) in his cradle proclaimed himself to be a servant of God and being given the directives of the prayer and *zakāh* are alluded to. Sorrow is expressed on these wretched people who in spite of knowing all these facts regarded an obedient servant of God to be his peer and an obedient women servant to be the mother of the son of God.

Verses (37-40): Christians are rebuked on their mutual differences regarding Jesus (sws) in spite of the latter's clear teachings. They are warned of the advent of a day when all these differences will be settled.

Verses (41-50): The way Abraham (sws) invited his father to monotheism and the way he had to migrate as a result are referred to. It is then alluded to that as a reward of this migration, God blessed him with children in spite of his old age.

Verses (51-63): The life and traits of prophets Moses (sws), Aaron (sws), Ishmael (sws) and Idrīs are concisely referred. It is stated that these were very steadfast prophets among the progeny of Adam (sws), Noah (sws), Abraham (sws) and Jacob (sws). Such was their relationship with God that when they would hear His verses, they fell down in prostration. Then from among their progeny such unworthy descendents were born who totally gave up the prayer and forsook paying *zakāh* and ended up as slaves their to their desires. These people will soon see the consequences of their deviance. Only those among them will be receive salvation who will repent and mend their ways.

Verses (64-65): Through the tongue of Gabriel, the Prophet (sws) is directed to be patient and wait for the decree of God. He must not show haste.

Verses (66-72): Those who deny the Hereafter are rebuked and admonished and their fate is pointed out.

Verses (73-82): The answer given by the arrogant to the warnings of the Qur'ān is referred to. They contended that if they were well-off in relation to the believers of the Qur'ān, it necessarily means that their beliefs and deeds were also better; in the first place, there is no the Day of Judgement and if ever it comes, they would still be better than these paupers and needy believers. This baseless mentality is refuted by God and the actual reality is pointed out.

Verses (83-96): The Prophet (sws) is urged to be patient and wait: he should not be worried at the demand of those who want to hasten the punishment. They will soon meet their fate. The deities they are depending upon will not the slightest be of benefit

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to them. Only the believers will succeed on the Day of Judgement.

Verses (97-98): The Prophet (sws) is told that the Qur'ān is the best instrument to warn people and give them glad tidings. Those who have the ability will profess faith; those who will not will for themselves see their fate. He need not worry about them.

As a result of this analysis, the structure and coherence of the *sūrah* becomes very evident. In God's name, I know begin explaining it. With God lies the urge.

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Section I: Verses (1-15)

بِسۡمِ اللّٰہِ الرَّحۡمٰنِ الرَّحِیۡمِ

كٓهٰيٰعٓصٓ ﴿١﴾ ذِكۡرُ رَحۡمَتِ رَبِّكَ عَبۡدَهٗ زَكَرِيَّا ﴿٢﴾ اِذۡ نَادٰى رَبَّهٗ نِدَآءً خَفِيًّا ﴿٣﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اِنِّىۡ وَهَنَ الۡعَظۡمُ مِنِّىۡ وَ
اشۡتَعَلَ الرَّاۡسُ شَيۡبًا وَّلَمۡ اَكُنۡۢ بِدُعَآئِكَ رَبِّ شَقِيًّا ﴿٤﴾ وَاِنِّىۡ خِفۡتُ الۡمَوَالِىَ مِنۡ وَّرَآءِىۡ وَكَانَتِ امۡرَاَتِىۡ عَاقِرًا
فَهَبۡ لِىۡ مِنۡ لَّدُنۡكَ وَلِيًّا ﴿٥﴾ يَّرِثُنِىۡ وَيَرِثُ مِنۡ اٰلِ يَعۡقُوۡبَ ۖ وَاجۡعَلۡهُ رَبِّ رَضِيًّا ﴿٦﴾ يٰزَكَرِيَّاۤ اِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلٰمِ
اسۡمُهٗ يَحۡيٰى ۙ لَمۡ نَجۡعَلۡ لَّهٗ مِنۡ قَبۡلُ سَمِيًّا ﴿٧﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اَنّٰى يَكُوۡنُ لِىۡ غُلٰمٌ وَّكَانَتِ امۡرَاَتِىۡ عَاقِرًا وَّقَدۡ بَلَغۡتُ مِنَ
الۡكِبَرِ عِتِيًّا ﴿٨﴾ قَالَ كَذٰلِكَ ۚ قَالَ رَبُّكَ هُوَ عَلَىَّ هَيِّنٌ وَّقَدۡ خَلَقۡتُكَ مِنۡ قَبۡلُ وَلَمۡ تَكُ شَيۡـًٔا ﴿٩﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اجۡعَلۡ
لِّىۡۤ اٰيَةً ؕ قَالَ اٰيَتُكَ اَلَّا تُكَلِّمَ النَّاسَ ثَلٰثَ لَيَالٍ سَوِيًّا ﴿١٠﴾ فَخَرَجَ عَلٰى قَوۡمِهٖ مِنَ الۡمِحۡرَابِ فَاَوۡحٰۤى اِلَيۡهِمۡ اَنۡ
سَبِّحُوۡا بُكۡرَةً وَّعَشِيًّا ﴿١١﴾ يٰيَحۡيٰى خُذِ الۡكِتٰبَ بِقُوَّةٍ ؕ وَاٰتَيۡنٰهُ الۡحُكۡمَ صَبِيًّا ﴿١٢﴾ وَّحَنَانًا مِّنۡ لَّدُنَّا وَزَكٰوةً ؕ وَكَانَ
تَقِيًّا ﴿١٣﴾ وَّبَرًّا بِوَالِدَيۡهِ وَلَمۡ يَكُنۡ جَبَّارًا عَصِيًّا ﴿١٤﴾ وَسَلٰمٌ عَلَيۡهِ يَوۡمَ وُلِدَ وَيَوۡمَ يَمُوۡتُ وَيَوۡمَ يُبۡعَثُ حَيًّا ﴿١٥﴾

In the name of God, the Most-Gracious, the Ever-Merciful.

Ka Hā Yā ‘Ayn Ṣu‘ād. This is a reminder of the favour of your Lord which He bestowed on His servant Zacharias, when he secretly called his Lord. He pleaded: “Lord! My bones have become hollow and my head has glowed white with old age, and Lord! I have never remained deprived after calling upon You. I fear my brethren after me, and my wife is barren. So, grant me an heir from Yourself who is not only my heir but also of the traditions of Jacob’s family. And Lord! Make him a likeable person.” (1-6)

“O Zacharias! We give you glad tidings of a boy who will be called Yaḥyā. We have not created anyone like him before.” He said: “Lord! How can a boy be born to me when my wife is barren and I too have reached the helplessness of old age.” He said: “Thus shall it happen. It is said by your Lord: ‘This is very easy for me. Before this, I have created you when you were nothing.’” Zacharias said: “My Lord! Appoint a sign for me.” God said: “The sign for you is that you will not be able to speak to people for three days and nights even though you will be perfectly healthy.” Hence, he came out to his people from the abode of worship and gestured to them to glorify God from dawn to dusk. (7-11)

“Yaḥyā! Hold fast to Our Book.” And We gave him the ability to take decisions in

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his very childhood and blessed him with compassion and purity specially from Our self and he was very pious and obedient to his parents. He was not rebellious and defiant. Peace be to him the day he was born and the day he will die and the day he will be raised to life. (12-15)

Explanation

كٓهٰيٰعٓصٓ ﴿١﴾[1]

These are from among the abbreviated letters. Detailed discussion on this can be found under the first verse of Sūrah al-Baqarah.

ذِكْرُ رَحْمَتِ رَبِّكَ عَبْدَهٗ زَكَرِيَّا ﴿٢﴾[2]

The word ذِكْرُ is in the same meaning as the imperative word اذْكُرْ in the succeeding verses in which all prophets from Mary (sws) to Idrīs (sws) are mentioned. The verse informs the Prophet (sws) that while these foolish people have become oblivious of these accounts, they are being narrated to him so that he benefits from them and urges others to gain benefit from them too. The word عَبْدَهٗ affectionately refers to Zacharias (sws). What can be a greater honour for a person than God Himself calling him His servant? In the words of Ḥāfiẓ:

بولائے تو کہ گر بندہ خویشم خوانی
از سر خواجگیٔ کون و مکان برخیزم

(I swear by your friendship that if you accept me as your slave, I will abandon the wealth and status of this world in exchange of this.)

اِذْ نَادٰى رَبَّهٗ نِدَآءً خَفِيًّا ﴿٣﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اِنِّيْ وَهَنَ الْعَظْمُ مِنِّيْ وَاشْتَعَلَ الرَّاْسُ شَيْبًا وَّلَمْ اَكُنْۢ بِدُعَآئِكَ رَبِّ شَقِيًّا ﴿٤﴾[3]

This is the supplication of Zacharias (sws) for the birth of a son. It was most probably done while he was stationed in the Temple for *i'tikāf*, as is allued to ahead. It is evident from it that supplicating in private is its foremost etitquette and the best recommendation for its acceptance too. In fact, these are the supplications which are free of pretension and it is in them that a person really expresses his secrets to God.

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1. Ka Hā Yā 'Ayn Ṣu'ād.

2. This is a reminder of the favour of your Lord which He bestowed on His servant Zacharias.

3. When he secretly called his Lord. He pleaded: "Lord! My bones have become hollow and my head has glowed white with old age, and Lord! I have never remained deprived after calling upon You.

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For this reason, this etiquette of the supplication must be kept in mind. Only collective supplications are an exception to this.

The real emphasis of the words وَهَنَ الْعَظْمُ مِنِّيْ is that that even his bones have become hollow, what to speak of the outer body. These words form a prelude to his actual supplication. Undoubtedly, so effective was this prelude that if it be not considered impertinence, I would say that he tried to capture the mercy of God through it. Firstly, he presented his frailty and weakness as a recommendation to God and secondly, the way he related himself to God all his life. He said that he had never been deprived after asking God. One can see that a person's request cannot be turned down by a source from where he has never been refused specially now when he has become weak and frail and his bones have gone dry.

وَاِنِّيْ خِفْتُ الْمَوَالِيَ مِنْ وَّرَآءِيْ وَكَانَتِ امْرَاَتِيْ عَاقِرًا فَهَبْ لِيْ مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا ۝ يَّرِثُنِيْ وَيَرِثُ مِنْ اٰلِ يَعْقُوْبَ ۖ وَاجْعَلْهُ رَبِّ رَضِيًّا ۝[4]

مَوَالِيَ refers to a person's paternal family, fraternity and his in-laws. It is evident that Zachariahs relatives were not good people. He feared that after his death they would not be able to carry on his traditions and that of Jacob's family, which were a distinctive feature of this noble family. He wanted that there should be someone from his family who would be able to carry on with its mission and also be a bearer of these tradition. As for himself, he had entered the last phase of old age and weakness and his wife too was barren. There were not much hope for him in the general scheme of things. However, he knew that all means and resources are in God's hands. God is not dependent on them. For this reason, he made this supplication.

يٰزَكَرِيَّآ اِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلٰمِ ِۨاسْمُهٗ يَحْيٰى ۙ لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَّهٗ مِنْ قَبْلُ سَمِيًّا ۝[5]

When a supplication is made at the right time, with the correct objective, with sincere emotions and with the right selection of words, it is immediately accepted. All measns and resources become available for it. Darkness could be prevalent, circumstances may look bleak and there may not be any hope; yet if a person's supplication spontaneously expresses the conviction that he has only one place to go; it is the only place from where he had obtained the desired response in the past and now also he expects the same, then the mercy of God appears for him from where he

4. I fear my brethren after me, and my wife is barren. So, grant me an heir from Yourself who is not only my heir but also of the traditions of Jacob's family. And Lord! Make him a likeable person."

5."O Zacharias! We give you glad tidings of a boy who will be called Yaḥyā. We have not created anyone like him before."

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cannot even imagine. Such is the majesty of this mercy that those who are slaves to apparent resources are wonderstruck. Zachariah's supplication was also made with the correct objective, at the right time and with sincere emotions and thus was accepted as soon as he uttered it.

In لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَّهٗ مِنْ قَبْلُ سَمِيًّا the word سَمِيٌّ means "peer or example." Thus it is used in this meaning in verse 65 of this very *sūrah*: هَلْ تَعْلَمُ لَهٗ سَمِيًّا (are you aware of any peer of God?). These words are meant to assure Zacharias (sws) that though he has become old and his wife is barren and there is no example of such a couple bearing children, but God's will is to bless him with a child that has no parallel.

قَالَ رَبِّ اَنّٰى يَكُوْنُ لِىْ غُلٰمٌ وَّكَانَتِ امْرَاَتِىْ عَاقِرًا وَّقَدْ بَلَغْتُ مِنَ الْكِبَرِ عِتِيًّا ﴿٨﴾[6]

The word عِتِيٌّ means "something exceeding the limits and becoming beyond control."

In order to gain further assurance regarding these glad tidings, Zacharias (sws) has expressed here his doubts viz the viz the apparent circumstances.

قَالَ كَذٰلِكَ ۚ قَالَ رَبُّكَ هُوَ عَلَىَّ هَيِّنٌ وَّقَدْ خَلَقْتُكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَمْ تَكُ شَيْـًٔا ﴿٩﴾[7]

Concomitant indications show that this answer is given by a divine voice. The enunciative (*khabar*) of كَذٰلِكَ is suppressed to lay emphasis on it. The implication is that this is His God's decision and is destined to happen. How can it be difficult for Him to bring into existence a child from old parents when He has created human beings from nothingness.

قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِّىْٓ اٰيَةً ۭ قَالَ اٰيَتُكَ اَلَّا تُكَلِّمَ النَّاسَ ثَلٰثَ لَيَالٍ سَوِيًّا ﴿١٠﴾[8]

Here Zacharias (sws) has presented another request for his mental assurance. Since these glad tidings were a manifestation of his desire and had great importance for him, he wanted to have complete satisfaction. Since he had heard these words from a source, he could have thought that this a reverberation of his own desire from within himself. He thus requested for a sign from God which could fully assure him that these glad tidings were from Him and not from Satan or his own self. The Qur'ān has mentioned similar requests of other prophets too. This response by Zacharias (sws) shows that prophets of God exercise great caution in accepting what is instructed to them in dreams and in through such voices. This does not at all tell on the weakness of

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6. He said: "Lord! How can a boy be born to me when my wife is barren and I too have reached the helplessness of old age."

7. He said: "Thus shall it happen. It is said by your Lord: 'This is very easy for me. Before this, I have created you when you were nothing.'"

8. Zacharias said: "My Lord! Appoint a sign for me." God said: "The sign for you is that you will not be able to speak to people for three days and nights even though you will be perfectly healthy."

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their faith. The Almighty accepted this request of Zacharias (sws) as well in the manner mentioned in this verse. Obviously if a person is able to remember God through his tongue but cannot speak anything else, then this cannot be termed a state influenced by Satan; it can only be a state that reflects the influence of the the Most Merciful God. Thus in this state Zacharias (sws) came out of his worship abode: he could not speak anything. He directed people to remain engaged in glorifying God.

Some scholars have interpreted the words اَلَّا تُكَلِّمَ as a negative imperative and not just the portrayal of a state. In their opinion, they would mean that when Zacharias (sws) asked for a sign, he was told that he should not talk to people for three days. Such scholars have not properly reflected on the reason for which Zacharias (sws) had asked for a sign nor on the reason why he was asked to remain silent for three days and three nights.

The word سَوِیٌّ means "to be devoid of a shortcoming or an ailment." In other words, this state of Zacharias (sws) would not be because of a shortcoming or an ailment. It would be a sign from God in full health. It is similar to what is mentioned regarding Moses' miracle that his white hand would not be because of any illness. It may be noted that سَوِیٌّ does not mean "continuous" or "consecutive." It occurs in the meaning I have just referred to in verse 17 of this *sūrah* too.

The word لَیَالٍ encompasses both night and day. Thus in verse 41 of Sūrah Āl-i 'Imrān, the word used is اَیَّامٌ which also encompasses both day and night. This usage is common in Arabic.

فَخَرَجَ عَلٰی قَوْمِهٖ مِنَ الْمِحْرَابِ فَاَوْحٰۤی اِلَیْهِمْ اَنْ سَبِّحُوْا بُكْرَةً وَّ عَشِیًّا ﴿۱۱﴾[9]

The word الْمِحْرَاب refers to a room or a vernadah of worship. It is evident from the verse that at the time of supplication, Zacharias (sws) was stationed at some place in the Temple. It is also evident from verse 39 of Sūrah Āl-i 'Imrān that he received these glad tidings while he was praying. After that he came out to his people as is mentioned in the verse under discussion. His gesturing towards his people to glorify God also shows that he was harbouring a major secret of providence the time of whose manifestation had not arrived. People should wait for it and during this time engage in remembering God.

یٰیَحْیٰی خُذِ الْكِتٰبَ بِقُوَّةٍ ؕ وَ اٰتَیْنٰهُ الْحُكْمَ صَبِیًّا ﴿۱۲﴾[10]

The word الْكِتٰب obviously refers to the Torah. No separate Book was revealed to Zacharias (sws). I have discussed in detail the word الْحُكْم under verse 79 of Sūrah Āl-

9. Hence, he came out to his people from the abode of worship and gestured to them to glorify God from dawn to dusk.

10. "Yaḥyā! Hold fast to Our Book." And We gave him the ability to take decisions in his very childhood.

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i ‘Imrān. It refers to the power and ability to decide between right and wrong. This faculty appears generally after maturity and reaches its pinnacle at around forty years. But as for John (sws), he was blessed with this treasure from God in his childhood.

Deliberation shows that a part of the anecdote is suppressed before this verse: in accordance with God’s glad tidings John (sws) was born and reached mature age. He was blessed with prophethood from God and was directed by Him to hold fast to the Book of God. This meant that Satan and his accomplices are his eternal enemies and would try to turn him away from it with all their might. He should remain on guard from them and not be enticed by them. It is knows that John (sws) sacrificed his life for this Book.

وَّحَنَانًا مِّنْ لَّدُنَّا وَزَكٰوةً ؕ وَكَانَ تَقِيًّا ﴿۱۳﴾ وَّبَرًّا بِوَالِدَيْهِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ جَبَّارًا عَصِيًّا ﴿۱۴﴾[11]

The word حَنَان means love, liveliness and compassion. This word is a very common Arabic word and it is strange how some people have ascribed this opinion to Ibn ‘Abbās (rta) that he was not aware of its meaning.[12]

This trait signifies that the heart and soul of a person are vibrant and living. Without it, a person is an inanimate stone like existence. The verse shows that John (sws) was blessed with this quality in a profound way. Its extent can be seen from his statements in the Gospels. His words warm the heart and soul even today.

After حَنَان, another trait mentioned about him is زَكٰوة. It means “purity and cleanliness.” Obviously, this refers to both inner and outer purity. It is actually a reflection of حَنَان. If a person has inner compassion, not only inner morals and beliefs are pure, his outerself is also pure.

After زَكٰوة, the word تَقِيٌّ is mentioned. The previous two traits mostly relate to the innerself of a person. This word points to John’s (sws) deeds and character: he was devout and pious. He led an ascetic life all through. He publicly asked people to repent in such a loud tone that its reverberations could be heard all around. When he delivered a speech in the Temple, people’s hearts would shake and shudder. He gave everything that he had to this world but took nothing from it. He would live on wild honey and locusts and covered his body with an apparel of coarse camel hair and the body for which he never made a shelter was sacrificed by him for the cause of God’s Book.

The verse goes on to mention his faithfulness to his parents: he could have easily thought that since from birth to his education and instruction, everything was done in God’s guidance, he was not in any way dependent on his parents. However, he was never overcome with this notion and continued to be faithful and obedient to them. He was not the slightest defiant and arrogant.

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11. And blessed him with compassion and purity specially from Our self and he was very pious and obedient to his parents. He was not rebellious and defiant.

12. See, for example: Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 16, 56.

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وَسَلٰمٌ عَلَيْهِ يَوْمَ وُلِدَ وَيَوْمَ يَمُوْتُ وَيَوْمَ يُبْعَثُ حَيًّا ﴿١٥﴾[13]

This is a reference to the greetings of the angels which welcomed him in every phase of life: the day he was born, the day he died and the day he would be raised to life he was and would be greeted with peace and blessings from the angels. This is a reference to the fact that contrary to what people did with him in this world, he received God's blessings at every stage of his life.

Section II: Verses (16-36)

In the succeeding verses, the birth of Jesus (sws) and his education and instruction are mentioned. Earlier, John (sws) was mentioned as a prelude to this. John (sws) is the predecessor of Jesus (sws) and belonged to the same family. His birth too resembles that of Jesus (sws) to a great extent. By mentioning both of them together, the Almighty has invited the Christians to open their eyes: how have they discriminated between two consectuvie prophets of the same lineage by regarding one to be god whereas both were born and educated from birth to death in a similar way?

Readers may now proceed to study these verses.

Text and Translation

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتٰبِ مَرْيَمَ ۘ اِذِ انْتَبَذَتْ مِنْ اَهْلِهَا مَكَانًا شَرْقِيًّا ﴿١٦﴾ فَاتَّخَذَتْ مِنْ دُوْنِهِمْ حِجَابًا ۖ فَاَرْسَلْنَآ اِلَيْهَا
رُوْحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا ﴿١٧﴾ قَالَتْ اِنِّيْٓ اَعُوْذُ بِالرَّحْمٰنِ مِنْكَ اِنْ كُنْتَ تَقِيًّا ﴿١٨﴾ قَالَ اِنَّمَآ اَنَا رَسُوْلُ رَبِّكِ ۖ
لِاَهَبَ لَكِ غُلٰمًا زَكِيًّا ﴿١٩﴾ قَالَتْ اَنّٰى يَكُوْنُ لِيْ غُلٰمٌ وَّلَمْ يَمْسَسْنِيْ بَشَرٌ وَّلَمْ اَكُ بَغِيًّا ﴿٢٠﴾ قَالَ كَذٰلِكِ ۚ قَالَ رَبُّكِ هُوَ
عَلَيَّ هَيِّنٌ ۚ وَلِنَجْعَلَهٗٓ اٰيَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَرَحْمَةً مِّنَّا ۚ وَكَانَ اَمْرًا مَّقْضِيًّا ﴿٢١﴾ فَحَمَلَتْهُ فَانْتَبَذَتْ بِهٖ مَكَانًا قَصِيًّا ﴿٢٢﴾
فَاَجَآءَهَا الْمَخَاضُ اِلٰى جِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ ۚ قَالَتْ يٰلَيْتَنِيْ مِتُّ قَبْلَ هٰذَا وَكُنْتُ نَسْيًا مَّنْسِيًّا ﴿٢٣﴾ فَنَادٰىهَا مِنْ تَحْتِهَآ
اَلَّا تَحْزَنِيْ قَدْ جَعَلَ رَبُّكِ تَحْتَكِ سَرِيًّا ﴿٢٤﴾ وَهُزِّيْٓ اِلَيْكِ بِجِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ تُسٰقِطْ عَلَيْكِ رُطَبًا جَنِيًّا ﴿٢٥﴾ فَكُلِيْ وَ
اشْرَبِيْ وَقَرِّيْ عَيْنًا ۚ فَاِمَّا تَرَيِنَّ مِنَ الْبَشَرِ اَحَدًا ۙ فَقُوْلِيْٓ اِنِّيْ نَذَرْتُ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ صَوْمًا فَلَنْ اُكَلِّمَ الْيَوْمَ اِنْسِيًّا ﴿٢٦﴾
فَاَتَتْ بِهٖ قَوْمَهَا تَحْمِلُهٗ ۭ قَالُوْا يٰمَرْيَمُ لَقَدْ جِئْتِ شَيْـــًٔا فَرِيًّا ﴿٢٧﴾ يٰٓاُخْتَ هٰرُوْنَ مَا كَانَ اَبُوْكِ امْرَاَ سَوْءٍ وَّمَا كَانَتْ
اُمُّكِ بَغِيًّا ﴿٢٨﴾ فَاَشَارَتْ اِلَيْهِ ۭ قَالُوْا كَيْفَ نُكَلِّمُ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الْمَهْدِ صَبِيًّا ﴿٢٩﴾ قَالَ اِنِّيْ عَبْدُ اللّٰهِ ۭ اٰتٰنِيَ الْكِتٰبَ وَ

13. Peace be to him the day he was born and the day he will die and the day he will be raised to life.

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جَعَلَنِيْ نَبِيًّا ﴿٣٠﴾ وَّ جَعَلَنِيْ مُبٰرَكًا اَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُ ۪ وَ اَوْصٰنِيْ بِالصَّلٰوةِ وَ الزَّكٰوةِ مَا دُمْتُ حَيًّا ﴿٣١﴾ وَّ بَرًّۢا بِوَالِدَتِيْ ۫ وَ لَمْ
يَجْعَلْنِيْ جَبَّارًا شَقِيًّا ﴿٣٢﴾ وَ السَّلٰمُ عَلَيَّ يَوْمَ وُلِدْتُّ وَ يَوْمَ اَمُوْتُ وَ يَوْمَ اُبْعَثُ حَيًّا ﴿٣٣﴾ ذٰلِكَ عِيْسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ ۚ
قَوْلَ الْحَقِّ الَّذِيْ فِيْهِ يَمْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ مَا كَانَ لِلّٰهِ اَنْ يَّتَّخِذَ مِنْ وَّلَدٍ ۙ سُبْحٰنَهٗ ؕ اِذَا قَضٰۤى اَمْرًا فَاِنَّمَا يَقُوْلُ لَهٗ كُنْ
فَيَكُوْنُ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ رَبِّيْ وَ رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوْهُ ؕ هٰذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِيْمٌ ﴿٣٦﴾

And recall the anecdote of Mary in the Book, when she left her people and stationed herself on the eastern abode. Thus she kept herself in seclusion from them. Then We sent to her Our angel who appeared before her in the form of a full-grown man. She said: "I seek refuge from you with the Merciful God, if you fear Him." He said: "I have been sent by your very Lord so that I can grant you a noble son." She said: "How can a boy be born to me; neither has a man touched me nor am I a harlot?" He said: "Thus will it happen. Your Lord says: 'This is easy for Me. We shall do this so that [he be Our messenger] and so that We make him Our sign for people and a mercy from Us. And this matter has been decreed.'" (16-21)

So, Mary became pregnant with that child and she went away with him to a distant place. Ultimately, labour pains made her go to the trunk of a date-palm. At that time, she said: "Alas! Would that I had died before this and had been totally forgotten." (22-23)

Thus, an angel from below [the palm tree] called her and said: "Grieve not! Your Lord has made a stream to flow from below you. And shake the trunk of the date-palm towards yourself; fresh dates will drop on you. So, eat and drink and soothe your eyes. And if anyone objects, gesture to him: 'I have vowed to fast for the Most Merciful God; so, today I shall not converse with any human being.'" (24-26)

Then she came over to her people with the child in her lap. They remarked: "Mary! You have done a very strange thing. O Sister of Aaron! Neither was your father an evil person nor was your mother a harlot." (27-28)

She gestured towards the child. People said: "How can we talk to him who is a mere child in the lap?" The child spoke: "I am a servant of God. He has bestowed the Book on me and made me a prophet and made me a fountainhead of blessings wherever I be. And He has directed me to be diligent in the prayer and in *zakāh* as long as I am alive and made me obedient to my mother; not someone who is rebellious and wretched. Peace be to me the day I was born and the day I shall die and the day I shall be raised to life." (29-33)

This is Jesus, son of Mary. Mentioned thus is the real truth about him in which these people are disputing. It is not befitting for God to make an offspring. Exalted is He. When He decides upon some matter, He need only say: "Be" to it and it happens. (34-35)

And indeed, God is my Lord and yours too. So, worship Him only. This alone is the straight path. (36)

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Explanation

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتٰبِ مَرْيَمَ ۘ اِذِ انْتَبَذَتْ مِنْ اَهْلِهَا مَكَانًا شَرْقِيًّا ﴿١٦﴾[14]

The word الْكِتٰب refers to the Gospels in which the anecdote of Mary has been narrated in parts. I have referred to them in detail in the exegesis of Sūrah Āl-i ‘Imrān. For this reason, here I will confine myself to discussing the context of these verses.

The word انتباذ means to seclude one’s self in isolation. Here it refers to Maryam (sws) stationing herself for *i‘tikāf* on the eastern side of the Temple. This is because it was this side that was reserved for women for this purpose. Maps of those times indicate a “women court” on the eastern side. The reason that the Christians made east as their direction of prayer has a lot to do with the fact that they gave special importance to this direction for this reason.

فَاتَّخَذَتْ مِنْ دُوْنِهِمْ حِجَابًا ۖ فَاَرْسَلْنَآ اِلَيْهَا رُوْحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا ﴿١٧﴾[15]

Stretching a barrier between herself and people refers to Mary (sws) being stationed for *i‘tikāf*. It seems that God wanted to test her when He sent an angel to her in the form of a human being. Generally angels are not sent by God in this form. It is hard to image the impact this incident must have had on Mary (sws), who had no experience of any divine communication. However, at this critical juncture, the character she showed was matchless.

قَالَتْ اِنِّيْٓ اَعُوْذُ بِالرَّحْمٰنِ مِنْكَ اِنْ كُنْتَ تَقِيًّا ﴿١٨﴾[16]

These words reflect Mary’s great poise and grace.

قَالَ اِنَّمَآ اَنَا رَسُوْلُ رَبِّكِ ۖ لِاَهَبَ لَكِ غُلٰمًا زَكِيًّا ﴿١٩﴾[17]

This answer by the angel was very direct to allay her fears.

قَالَتْ اَنّٰى يَكُوْنُ لِيْ غُلٰمٌ وَّلَمْ يَمْسَسْنِيْ بَشَرٌ وَّلَمْ اَكُ بَغِيًّا ﴿٢٠﴾[18]

The word بَغِيٌّ refers to a whore.

It is evident from this statement of Mary (sws) that it is erroneously recorded in the

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14. And recall the anecdote of Mary in the Book, when she left her people and stationed herself on the eastern abode.

15. Thus she kept herself in seclusion from them. Then We sent to her Our angel who appeared before her in the form of a full-grown man.

16. She said: “I seek refuge from you with the Merciful God, if you fear Him.”

17. He said: “I have been sent by your very Lord so that I can grant you a noble son.”

18. She said: “How can a boy be born to me; neither has a man touched me nor am I a harlot?”

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Gospel of Luke (1:26-27) that she was married to a person named Joseph. If she had been married, this news would have been welcomed by her and instead of expressing her reservations in the words cited, she would have expressed her gratitude to God. In my opinion, this account of Luke's Gospel is the result of some Jewish incursion. This is because Jews have remained averse to the miraculous birth of Jesus (sws). Muslim exegetes who have cited this account without much deliberation have unintentionally furthered the agenda of the Jews. Regarding Mary (sws), it should be kept in mind that she had dedicated herself to the service of the Temple in accordance with her own vow. For this reason, she could never have married. Servants of the Temple never used to get married. For a moment, even if this tradition is ignored, the above cited words can only be appropriate from a chaste virgin. No married woman can utter them. Moreover, the words in which Mary's family has rebuked her in the succeeding verses become baseless in this situation.

قَالَ كَذٰلِكِ ۚ قَالَ رَبُّكِ هُوَ عَلَيَّ هَيِّنٌ ۚ وَلِنَجْعَلَهٗٓ اٰيَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَرَحْمَةً مِّنَّا ۚ وَكَانَ اَمْرًا مَّقْضِيًّا ﴿٢١﴾[19]

The co-ordinated clause of وَلِنَجْعَلَهٗٓ is suppressed here because of concomitant indication. If it is taken into account, the whole discourse would be: it is the assertion of your Lord that thus shall it happen in order to make him a messenger for the Israelites and in order that he become from Us a sign and mercy for people.

It is mentioned at several instances in the Qur'ān that Jesus (sws) was a sign of God. Examples include verse 91 of Sūrah al-Anbiyā' and verse 50 of Sūrah al-Mu'minūn. In my opinion, the miraculous birth of Jesus (sws) is a great sign of the Day of Judgement. The greatest doubt that the naïve have on its advent is that how can it come about without any means. The existence of Jesus (sws) answers this doubt. Everything comes into being through God's directive of "be." Jesus (sws) too was born in this manner. For this reason both the Gospel and the Qur'ān call him the word of God (*kalimatullāh*).

فَحَمَلَتْهُ فَانْتَبَذَتْ بِهٖ مَكَانًا قَصِيًّا ﴿٢٢﴾[20]

The word قَصِيٌّ means a far off place. Here it is not specified. However, it is evident from the Gospels that she had gone to Bethlehem. Obviously, she must have been utterly distraught when she realized that she was pregnant. In such circumstances, a person's own environment becomes very uncomfortable for him. He wants to find some new place for mental peace. This was what Mary (sws) too had in mind.

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19. He said: "Thus will it happen. Your Lord says: 'This is easy for Me. We shall do this so that [he be Our messenger] and so that We make him Our sign for people and a mercy from Us. And this matter has been decreed.'"

20. So, Mary became pregnant with that child and she went away with him to a distant place.

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فَاَجَآءَهَا الْمَخَاضُ اِلٰى جِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ ۚ قَالَتْ يٰلَيْتَنِيْ مِتُّ قَبْلَ هٰذَا وَكُنْتُ نَسْيًا مَّنْسِيًّا ﴿٢٣﴾[21]

The word جِذْعٌ means "a stem" and the *alif lām* on النَّخْلَة shows Mary (sws) already knew about that tree. It is possible that in her state of consternation she was guided in a dream from God to go to this tree when the time of birth arrives; there she would be provided her necessary needs. So when she felt her labour pains, she walked off towards it.

One can only imagine what must have gone through the minds of a chaste virgin of a noble family when she saw how she would be humiliated at the birth of her child. The words of the verse reflect her deep agony.

فَنَادٰىهَا مِنْ تَحْتِهَآ اَلَّا تَحْزَنِيْ قَدْ جَعَلَ رَبُّكِ تَحْتَكِ سَرِيًّا ﴿٢٤﴾[22]

Concomitant indications show that these words were uttered by the angel and the antecedent of the pronoun in تَحْتِهَآ is النَّخْلَة. The word سَرِيٌّ refers to a small spring. In spite of her tremendous agony apparent from the previous verse, Mary (sws) neither complained to anyone except God nor took a wrong step out of frustration. It was this that the Almighty was testing her in. As soon as she passed this test, God's mercy appeared before her from a place where she could not even imagine. The blessings this obedient servant of God received from Him have no parallel in the annals of mankind.

وَهُزِّيْٓ اِلَيْكِ بِجِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ تُسٰقِطْ عَلَيْكِ رُطَبًا جَنِيًّا ﴿٢٥﴾[23]

The word جِذْعٌ refers to the stem of a tree. Shaking it was just an excuse for the mercy of God to appear; otherwise, how could she have had the power to solely do so.

It is evident from the style of the verse that just as someone signals his cook to bring food, it was enough for her to touch the stem for the dates to fall on her.

فَكُلِيْ وَاشْرَبِيْ وَقَرِّيْ عَيْنًا ۚ فَاِمَّا تَرَيِنَّ مِنَ الْبَشَرِ اَحَدًا ۙ فَقُوْلِيْٓ اِنِّيْ نَذَرْتُ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ صَوْمًا فَلَنْ اُكَلِّمَ الْيَوْمَ اِنْسِيًّا ﴿٢٦﴾[24]

In the *sharī'ah* of the Jews, silence was a requisite of the fast. Though it is not specified in the verse that the angel had directed Mary (sws) to fast, this is evident from the context and concomitant indications: when the angel is asked her to motion

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21. Ultimately, labour pains made her go to the trunk of a date-palm. At that time, she said: "Alas! Would that I had died before this and had been totally forgotten."

22. Thus, an angel from below [the palm tree] called her and said: "Grieve not! Your Lord has made a stream to flow from below you.

23. "And shake the trunk of the date-palm towards yourself; fresh dates will drop on you."

24. "So, eat and drink and soothe your eyes. And if anyone objects, gesture to him: 'I have vowed to fast for the Most Merciful God; so, today I shall not converse with any human being.'"

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towards anyone speaking to her that she was fasting and could not converse, it was obvious from this that he must have directed her to fast; otherwise, how could he have asked her to lie.

A question may arise in the mind of someone that it is not allowed for a woman in this state to fast; so how was Mary (sws) fasting. The answer to this question is that among the Jews the fast of mere silence was part of their law and this fast could be kept in every state. Thus the words "remain silent" are used in their scriptures (see, for example: Zacharias, 2:13) at various instances to remember and worship God.

Another question that may strike doubt is the use of the word قُوْلِيْٓ. A word that implies "to gesture" should have been used. The answer to this question is that in the Arabic language the word قال also means "to gesture." Thus for example, expressions قال برمحه (he gestured through his spear) and قال بيده هكذ (he gestured in this way through his hand) are common in Arabic.

فَاَتَتْ بِهٖ قَوْمَهَا تَحْمِلُهٗ ؕ قَالُوْا يٰمَرْيَمُ لَقَدْ جِئْتِ شَيْـًٔا فَرِيًّا ﴿۲۷﴾ يٰٓاُخْتَ هٰرُوْنَ مَا كَانَ اَبُوْكِ امْرَاَ سَوْءٍ وَّمَا كَانَتْ اُمُّكِ بَغِيًّا ﴿۲۸﴾[25]

Aaron here does not refer to the brother of Moses (sws). He is someone reputable from the family of Mary (sws). This is evident from various narratives as well.

فَاَشَارَتْ اِلَيْهِ ؕ قَالُوْا كَيْفَ نُكَلِّمُ مَنْ كَانَ فِى الْمَهْدِ صَبِيًّا ﴿۲۹﴾[26]

Since Mary (sws) had kept a fast of silence, she could not have said anything from her mouth. She gestured to the child to answer on her behalf. Obviously, up to that time it must have become evident to her that the child was fully capable from God to defend her case.

In other words, when Mary (sws) fully succeeded in this extreme trial, the time came for God to show His mercy in various ways for such a righteous servant of Him.

قَالَ اِنِّىْ عَبْدُ اللّٰهِ ؕ اٰتٰنِىَ الْكِتٰبَ وَ جَعَلَنِىْ نَبِيًّا ﴿۳۰﴾ وَّ جَعَلَنِىْ مُبٰرَكًا اَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُ ۪ وَ اَوْصٰنِىْ بِالصَّلٰوةِ وَ الزَّكٰوةِ مَا دُمْتُ حَيًّا ﴿۳۱﴾ وَّ بَرًّا بِوَالِدَتِىْ ۫ وَ لَمْ يَجْعَلْنِىْ جَبَّارًا شَقِيًّا ﴿۳۲﴾[27]

In order for Mary (sws) to pass in flying colours the test she was put through, it

25. Then she came over to her people with the child in her lap. They remarked: "Mary! You have done a very strange thing. O Sister of Aaron! Neither was your father an evil person nor was your mother a harlot."

26. She gestured towards the child. People said: "How can we talk to him who is a mere child in the lap?"

27. The child spoke: "I am a servant of God. He has bestowed the Book on me and made me a prophet and made me a fountainhead of blessings wherever I be. And He has directed me to be diligent in the prayer and in *zakāh* as long as I am alive and made me obedient to my mother; not someone who is rebellious and wretched."

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was essential that the child in her lap bear witness to her innocence and chastity so that everyone is silenced. Since, I have already explained these statements of Jesus (sws) in the *tafsīr* of Sūrah Āl-i ‘Imrān, I will confine myself to mere hints here.

The first thing he said was: اِنِّیْ عَبْدُ اللّٰہِ (I am God’s servant). In other words, what he intended to say was that no one should be misled by the miraculous nature of his birth into thinking that he is some super-human. He is but God’s servant. Here the Qur’ān has expressed the real meaning of his words اِبْنُ اللّٰہِ. In Hebrew, the word اِبْن occurs for both “servant” and “son.” The context determines in which meaning it has been used. In the presence of the clear teachings of Jesus (sws), there was no ambiguity in the interpretation of this word. However, it was Paul who made it a means of mischief and invented the convoluted concept of trinity. I have tried to dispel this myth in the light of the Gospels in the explanations of Sūrah Āl-i ‘Imrān and Sūah al-Mā’idah.

The second thing that he said was that God had blessed him with a divine book and with prophethood and wherever he was, he would remain an embodiment of goodness for people. As fas the *sharī‘ah* was concerned, Jesus (sws) followed and practiced the *sharī‘ah* brought by Moses (sws), and also preached and revived it. However, he added the portion of wisdom to it. We find these counsels and sermons on wisdom in the Gospels in scattered form. He would shed these pearls from his mouth and light up his surroundings; any heart which had the slightest potential of life in it would spring to verve and vivacity by his words.

The third thing that he said was that he had been directed to pray and pay the *zakāh* all his life. It is primarily these two directives which are the foundation of all religions and *sharī‘ah*. For this reason, they are mentioned the foremost in all divine religions. Their apparent forms have remained different in different religions but each of their forms has preserved in it the essence of God’s worship and sympathy for His creatures. The prayer joins a person to his Lord in the true sense and the *zakāh* connects him to his brethren on the right footing. It is on adherence to these two things that adherence to the whole religion depends. If a person tries to raze these two pillars, he will raze the whole edifice of religion even though he may brag of following religion.

The fourth thing that he said was that God had made him obedient to his mother and not rebellious and defiant to her. In other words, even though he had been born in a very special manner and had also been blessed with special favours from his Lord, he was still a son of his mother and an obedient one too. That he had been blessed with special favours of God must was not to be construed by anyone as that he was not a human being. At the same time, he explained the fact that a person who was not obedient to him was callous and cruel. These statements of Jesus (sws) refute certain narratives in the Gospel which apparently show that he did not even have the necessary respect for his mother. It seems that when the claim of divinity was attached to Jesus (sws), such narratives were inserted in the Gospels to corroborate it.

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وَالسَّلٰمُ عَلَيَّ يَوْمَ وُلِدْتُّ وَيَوْمَ اَمُوْتُ وَيَوْمَ اُبْعَثُ حَيًّا ﴿٣٣﴾[28]

Just as in verse 15, the Almighty has given glad tidings of peace at every phase in the life of Zacharias (sws), in the same way Jesus (sws) has proclaimed this peace from the noble angels for his own self in all phases of life from his birth, to death to being raised to life again. It is also evident from this that just as every human being passes through all these phases of life, Jesus (sws) too passed and will pass through these phases. In this regard, assuming something for him on the basis of weak exegetical narratives would be against caution. Moreover, the Qur'ān too does not support any such thing.

ذٰلِكَ عِيْسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ ۚ قَوْلَ الْحَقِّ الَّذِيْ فِيْهِ يَمْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ مَا كَانَ لِلّٰهِ اَنْ يَّتَّخِذَ مِنْ وَّلَدٍ ۙ سُبْحٰنَهٗ ؕ اِذَا قَضٰۤى اَمْرًا فَاِنَّمَا يَقُوْلُ لَهٗ كُنْ فَيَكُوْنُ ﴿٣٥﴾[29]

These two verses are from God and as parenthetical sentences are inserted within the speech of Jesus (sws). The purpose is to aptly remind people of the facts about Jesus (sws) which he himself stated.

The word امتراء means "to fully squeeze the udder of a goat." From here, this word began to be used for creating an issue out of something very small and in creating various doubts and suspicions in it.

We have discussed the theology developed by the Christians under verse 17 of Sūrah al-Mā'idah. Readers may look it up. It will become evident from it how Paul transformed it into a convoluted concept.

The words "it is not befitting for God to make an offspring; exalted is He" refute the polytheism the Christians had become incriminated with by regarding Jesus (sws) to be the son of God. He is free of all such ascriptions. Had he needed a son, He was not dependent on anyone to materialize His intent. He only needs to say one word to execute His intent. Concealed in these words is also the message that the miraculous birth of Jesus (sws) is not an evidence of his divinity. It is the expression of God's command "Be." He wanted to create him in this way through this command.

وَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ رَبِّيْ وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوْهُ ؕ هٰذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِيْمٌ ﴿٣٦﴾[30]

The parenthetical sentence ended on the previous verse and this verse forms the

28. "Peace be to me the day I was born and the day I shall die and the day I shall be raised to life."

29. This is Jesus, son of Mary. Mentioned thus is the real truth about him in which these people are disputing. It is not befitting for God to make an offspring. Exalted is He. When He decides upon some matter, He need only say: "Be" to it and it happens. And indeed, God is my Lord and yours too. So, worship Him only. This alone is the straight path.

30. So, worship Him only. This alone is the straight path.

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closing part of Jesus' (sws) speech. The words "my father" and "your father" mentioned in the Gospels at various places have been corrected here by the Qur'ān. It is evident that this is what Jesus (sws) had actually said. In Hebrew the word اب is equally used for "father" and "Lord." The context determines the meaning in which it is used. Obviously, the expressions "my father" and "your father" can only connote "Lord" otherwise all human beings will become children of God. It will no longer remain a distinction for Jesus (sws).

Section III: Verses (37-40)

In these few verses, the Christians are rebuked on their mutual differences. They warn people of a day in which every thought and deed of a person will be exposed by the knowing and discerning God.

Readers may proceed to study the verses in the light of this background.

Text and Translation

فَاخْتَلَفَ الْاَحْزَابُ مِنْۢ بَيْنِهِمْ ۚ فَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ مَّشْهَدِ يَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿٣٧﴾ اَسْمِعْ بِهِمْ وَ اَبْصِرْ ۙ
يَوْمَ يَاْتُوْنَنَا لٰكِنِ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ الْيَوْمَ فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَ اَنْذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْحَسْرَةِ اِذْ قُضِيَ الْاَمْرُ ۘ وَ هُمْ فِيْ
غَفْلَةٍ وَّ هُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ اِنَّا نَحْنُ نَرِثُ الْاَرْضَ وَ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا وَ اِلَيْنَا يُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾

Thus various sects from among them mutually differed. So, for those who have committed disbelief there will be devastation because of the assembly of a horrible day. How well will they hear and see the day they shall come before Us! However, today these wrongdoers are in open error. And inform them of that day of longing when the matter shall be decided and these people are heedless and not believing. Indeed, We shall be the inheritors of the earth and its inhabitants and all people shall be returned to Us. (37-40)

Explanation

فَاخْتَلَفَ الْاَحْزَابُ مِنْۢ بَيْنِهِمْ ۚ فَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ مَّشْهَدِ يَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿٣٧﴾[31]

The verse implies that the reality about Jesus (sws) has been stated earlier and it is so evident that there is no possibility of any difference of opinion in it. However, Christians because of their wretchedness created difference in it and small sects emerged in them. Only a few among them who were the followers of Simon Peter adhered to the truth. It was they who professed faith in Muḥammad (sws) and the Qur'ān praised them on this.

31. Thus various sects from among them mutually differed. So, for those who have committed disbelief there will be devastation because of the assembly of a horrible day.

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The rest were the followers of Paul and continued to divide into various sects. The most prominent among them are the Catholics and the Protestants. Besides them there are several other small and big denominations among them.

The words "because of the assembly of a horrible day" refer to that great testimony of the prophets which they will bear on the Day of Judgement before God regarding their people. This testimony hs been mentioned in detail in the following words in Sūrah al-Mā'idah:

وَ اِذۡ قَالَ اللّٰهُ یٰعِیۡسَی ابۡنَ مَرۡیَمَ ءَاَنۡتَ قُلۡتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُوۡنِیۡ وَ اُمِّیَ اِلٰهَیۡنِ مِنۡ دُوۡنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ قَالَ سُبۡحٰنَكَ مَا یَكُوۡنُ لِیۡۤ اَنۡ اَقُوۡلَ مَا لَیۡسَ لِیۡ ۟ بِحَقٍّ ؕ اِنۡ كُنۡتُ قُلۡتُهٗ فَقَدۡ عَلِمۡتَهٗ ؕ تَعۡلَمُ مَا فِیۡ نَفۡسِیۡ وَ لَاۤ اَعۡلَمُ مَا فِیۡ نَفۡسِكَ ؕ اِنَّكَ اَنۡتَ عَلَّامُ الۡغُیُوۡبِ. مَا قُلۡتُ لَهُمۡ اِلَّا مَاۤ اَمَرۡتَنِیۡ بِهٖۤ اَنِ اعۡبُدُوا اللّٰهَ رَبِّیۡ وَ رَبَّكُمۡ ۚ وَ كُنۡتُ عَلَیۡهِمۡ شَهِیۡدًا مَّا دُمۡتُ فِیۡهِمۡ ۚ فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّیۡتَنِیۡ كُنۡتَ اَنۡتَ الرَّقِیۡبَ عَلَیۡهِمۡ ؕ وَ اَنۡتَ عَلٰی كُلِّ شَیۡءٍ شَهِیۡدٌ. اِنۡ تُعَذِّبۡهُمۡ فَاِنَّهُمۡ عِبَادُكَ ۚ وَ اِنۡ تَغۡفِرۡ لَهُمۡ فَاِنَّكَ اَنۡتَ الۡعَزِیۡزُ الۡحَكِیۡمُ. (۵: ۱۱۶-۱۱۸)

When God will ask: "Jesus son of Mary! Did you teach your people: 'Regard me and my mother as gods besides God?'" He will reply: "Glory be to You! How was it befitting for me to say something which I have no right to say? If I had said this, it would have been in Your knowledge. You know what is in my heart and I do not know what is in Your heart. Indeed, only You are aware of all hidden things. I only said to them what You commanded me: 'Worship God, Who is my Lord and your Lord too.' I was a witness to them as long as I remained among them. Then when You gave death to me, after that You have remained the Watcher over them and You are aware of all things. If You now punish them, they are your servants, and if You forgive them, You only are Mighty, very Wise." (5:116-118)

In the verse under consideration, it is the above mentioned great assembly from which the Jews are warned. It is obvious that when God will make Jesus (sws) bear the testimony mentioned in these verses of Sūrah al-Mā'idah, the Christians will feel ashamed to face both him and God. Nothing will then remain for them except devastation and mourning.

اَسۡمِعۡ بِهِمۡ وَ اَبۡصِرۡ ۙ یَوۡمَ یَاۡتُوۡنَنَا لٰكِنِ الظّٰلِمُوۡنَ الۡیَوۡمَ فِیۡ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِیۡنٍ ﴿۳۸﴾[32]

The expressions اسمع بہ and ابصر بہ are meant to express wonder in Arabic. The implication is that today when the reality is sounded and made palpable to them, they neither listen nor hear; however, on that day of great assembly, their eyes will see full

32. How well will they hear and see the day they shall come before Us! However, today these wrongdoers are in open error.

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well and their ears will hear full well. No one would be more aware of them at that time. However, it would be too late to listen and to see: they would be doomed.

The word الظّٰلِمُوْنَ here signifies those who wrong their own souls. They are the ones who have eyes and ears but are still blind and deaf.

وَاَنْذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْحَسْرَةِ اِذْ قُضِيَ الْاَمْرُ ۘ وَهُمْ فِيْ غَفْلَةٍ وَّهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿۳۹﴾[33]

The expression يَوْمَ الْحَسْرَةِ refers to that day of great assembly. On that day, everyone's eyes will be opened but the doors to repentance, reformation and making up will be closed. Those who today are not professing faith because of their negligence will longingly wish to go back to the previous world to do righteous deeds but this wish will never be fulfilled. On that day, all matters will be decided and every person will face the consequences of his deeds.

اِنَّا نَحْنُ نَرِثُ الْاَرْضَ وَمَنْ عَلَيْهَا وَاِلَيْنَا يُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿۴۰﴾[34]

The implication of this verse is that God will be the master of that day and people will appear before Him. None will be in a position to help anyone and without God's permission no intercession will take place.

Section IV: Verses (41-63)

In the succeeding verses, a brief account of the life and teachings of Abraham (sws), Moses (sws), Ishmā'īl (sws) and Idrīs (sws) is mentioned. The purpose of this mention is to on the one hand clarify before the Christians that the prophets from among the lineage of Adam (sws), Noah (sws), Abraham (sws) and Jacob (sws) who have passed before Jesus (sws) all called their people to the same message as Muḥammad (sws) is calling them to. However, such unworthy descendents are they that they have lost the teachings of these prophets and have become incriminated with religious innovations and gone astray. On the other hand, the purpose of this mention is to warn the Quraysh that they claim to be descendents of Abraham (sws) and Ishmael (sws) and bearers of his religion while these prophets have no link to the religion they are today following in their name. The real religion of Abraham (sws) is the one which the Qur'ān is presenting before them.

Readers may study these verses in the light of this background.

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33. And inform them of that day of longing when the matter shall be decided and these people are heedless and not believing.

34. Indeed, We shall be the inheritors of the earth and its inhabitants and all people shall be returned to Us.

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Text and Translation

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتٰبِ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ ۘ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ صِدِّيْقًا نَّبِيًّا ﴿٤١﴾ اِذْ قَالَ لِاَبِيْهِ يٰٓاَبَتِ لِمَ تَعْبُدُ مَا لَا يَسْمَعُ وَلَا يُبْصِرُ وَلَا
يُغْنِيْ عَنْكَ شَيْـًٔا ﴿٤٢﴾ يٰٓاَبَتِ اِنِّيْ قَدْ جَآءَنِيْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَمْ يَاْتِكَ فَاتَّبِعْنِيْٓ اَهْدِكَ صِرَاطًا سَوِيًّا ﴿٤٣﴾ يٰٓاَبَتِ لَا
تَعْبُدِ الشَّيْطٰنَ ۭ اِنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ عَصِيًّا ﴿٤٤﴾ يٰٓاَبَتِ اِنِّيْٓ اَخَافُ اَنْ يَّمَسَّكَ عَذَابٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمٰنِ فَتَكُوْنَ
لِلشَّيْطٰنِ وَلِيًّا ﴿٤٥﴾ قَالَ اَرَاغِبٌ اَنْتَ عَنْ اٰلِهَتِيْ يٰٓاِبْرٰهِيْمُ ۚ لَىِٕنْ لَّمْ تَنْتَهِ لَاَرْجُمَنَّكَ وَاهْجُرْنِيْ مَلِيًّا ﴿٤٦﴾ قَالَ سَلٰمٌ
عَلَيْكَ ۚ سَاَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكَ رَبِّيْ ۭ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ بِيْ حَفِيًّا ﴿٤٧﴾ وَاَعْتَزِلُكُمْ وَمَا تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَاَدْعُوْا رَبِّيْ ڰ عَسٰٓى اَلَّآ
اَكُوْنَ بِدُعَاۗءِ رَبِّيْ شَقِيًّا ﴿٤٨﴾ فَلَمَّا اعْتَزَلَهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ۙ وَهَبْنَا لَهٗٓ اِسْحٰقَ وَيَعْقُوْبَ ۭ وَكُلًّا جَعَلْنَا
نَبِيًّا ﴿٤٩﴾ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ رَّحْمَتِنَا وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ عَلِيًّا ﴿٥٠﴾ وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتٰبِ مُوْسٰٓى ۡ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ
مُخْلَصًا وَّكَانَ رَسُوْلًا نَّبِيًّا ﴿٥١﴾ وَنَادَيْنٰهُ مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّوْرِ الْاَيْمَنِ وَقَرَّبْنٰهُ نَجِيًّا ﴿٥٢﴾ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهٗ مِنْ رَّحْمَتِنَآ
اَخَاهُ هٰرُوْنَ نَبِيًّا ﴿٥٣﴾ وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتٰبِ اِسْمٰعِيْلَ ۡ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ صَادِقَ الْوَعْدِ وَكَانَ رَسُوْلًا نَّبِيًّا ﴿٥٤﴾ وَكَانَ يَاْمُرُ اَهْلَهٗ
بِالصَّلٰوةِ وَالزَّكٰوةِ ۠ وَكَانَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهٖ مَرْضِيًّا ﴿٥٥﴾ وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتٰبِ اِدْرِيْسَ ۡ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ صِدِّيْقًا نَّبِيًّا ﴿٥٦﴾ وَّرَفَعْنٰهُ
مَكَانًا عَلِيًّا ﴿٥٧﴾ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ الَّذِيْنَ اَنْعَمَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنَ النَّبِيّٖنَ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّةِ اٰدَمَ ۡ وَمِمَّنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوْحٍ ۡ وَّمِنْ ذُرِّيَّةِ
اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَاِسْرَاۗءِيْلَ ۡ وَمِمَّنْ هَدَيْنَا وَاجْتَبَيْنَا ۭ اِذَا تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتُ الرَّحْمٰنِ خَرُّوْا سُجَّدًا وَّبُكِيًّا ﴿٥٨﴾ۤ فَخَلَفَ
مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ اَضَاعُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاتَّبَعُوا الشَّهَوٰتِ فَسَوْفَ يَلْقَوْنَ غَيًّا ﴿٥٩﴾ اِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَاٰمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا
فَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ يَدْخُلُوْنَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ شَيْـًٔا ﴿٦٠﴾ جَنّٰتِ عَدْنِ ۨ الَّتِيْ وَعَدَ الرَّحْمٰنُ عِبَادَهٗ بِالْغَيْبِ ۭ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ
وَعْدُهٗ مَاْتِيًّا ﴿٦١﴾ لَا يَسْمَعُوْنَ فِيْهَا لَغْوًا اِلَّا سَلٰمًا ۭ وَلَهُمْ رِزْقُهُمْ فِيْهَا بُكْرَةً وَّعَشِيًّا ﴿٦٢﴾ تِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِيْ نُوْرِثُ
مِنْ عِبَادِنَا مَنْ كَانَ تَقِيًّا ﴿٦٣﴾

And mention the account of Abraham in the Book. Indeed, he was an upright person and a prophet. Recall, when he said to his father: "Father! Why do you worship those things that neither hear nor see and cannot be of any benefit to you? Dear Father! In truth, that knowledge has come to me which has not come to you. So, follow me, I shall show you the straight path. Father! Do not worship Satan. Surely, Satan is very defiant to God, the Most Gracious. Dear Father! I fear that some torment of the Most Gracious God may seize you and you end up becoming the companion of Satan." (41-45)

He replied: "Are you giving up my deities? If you do not desist, I shall stone you to death. So, get away me forever." (46)

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Abraham said: "Okay then peace be to you. I shall pray to my Lord to forgive you. He is very Merciful to me. I forsake you and those also that you worship besides God. And I shall only worship my Lord. I am hopeful that I shall not remain deprived after worshipping my Lord." (47-48)

Thus when he abandoned them and they also whom they worshipped instead of God, We blessed him with Isaac and Jacob and made each of them a prophet and granted them a share of Our blessings and bestowed on them fame, lofty and permanent. (49-50)

And mention the account of Moses in the Book. Indeed, he was a chosen person and a messenger and a prophet. And We called him from the blessed side of Ṭūr and called him close to whisper. And with Our grace gave him his brother Aaron by making him a prophet. (51-53).

And mention the account of Ishmael in the Book. Indeed, he was true to his promises and a messenger and a prophet. He would urge his people to the prayer and the *zakāh* and was a likeable person to His Lord. (54-55)

And mention Idrīs in the Book. Indeed, he was an upright person and a prophet. And We made him rise to a lofty status. (56-57)

These are the people whom God blessed from among His messengers from among the progeny of Adam and from the progeny of those whom We had boarded with Noah and from the progeny of Abraham and Israel and from among those whom We guided and chose. When the revelations of the Merciful God were recited to them, they would prostrate and fall down weeping. Then, after them, those people succeeded them who squandered the prayer and followed their desires. So, soon they will face the consequences of going astray. Only those are an exception to this who repent, accept faith and do righteous deeds. It is these people who shall enter Paradise and shall not face the slightest injustice. Eternal orchards promised to His servants by the Most Merciful God in that world which is hidden from the eyes. Indeed, His promise is destined to be fulfilled. They shall not hear any nonsensical talk in it. Salutations of peace shall be there for them everywhere. Their sustenance shall be available in it for them morning and evening. This is the Paradise that We shall give in inheritance to those among Our servants who fear God. (58-63)

Explanation

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتٰبِ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ ۘ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ صِدِّيْقًا نَّبِيًّا ﴿۴۱﴾[35]

Since Abraham (sws) is the head of both branches of prophethood and messengerhood that began with Isaac (sws) and Ishmael (sws), his account and teachings are mentioned the foremost so that the truth is conclusively conveyed to both the Israelites and the Ishmaelites.

35. And mention the account of Abraham in the Book. Indeed, he was an upright person and a prophet.

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Most exegetes interpret the book to be the Qur'ān. Though this can be regarded as plausible too, in my opinion, it refers to previous scriptures. Here and in later verses too where the accounts of the prophets are mentioned, it refers to the Torah and the Gospel. The purpose is to show that the teaching of all celebrated prophets of God is the same as that of the Qur'ān. Those who are denying the Qur'ān are in fact denying their own prophets and scriptures.

If the book is regarded to be the Qur'ān, it would mean that that the accounts of these prophets should be narrated to those who are their followers so that they learn a lesson. It is a blessing for them. If they do not benefit from these accounts, they will deprive themselves from God's favours and not harm anyone else.

In either of the two interpretations, the overall implication of the verse will not change much.

Here the upright nature of Abraham (sws) has been specially highlighted. The reason is that here both the People of the Book and the Idolaters of Arabia are being rebuked on inventing a whole new religion in spite of claiming to be Abraham's progeny and the inheritors of the religion preached by him. They have totally disfigured his teachings. Abraham (sws) was not one who was insincere to God like them. He was extremely upright and very sincere. He passed the tests he was put through by God. It was because of this success that he was made the head of communities by God. The People of the Book and the Idolaters of Arabia are told that if they want to be worthy successors and inheritors of Abraham (sws), then this is only possible if with full sincerity they fulfil what they promised God through Abraham (sws). Without doing this, neither do they deserve to be ascribed to him nor will have the share in the leadership that God has promised Abraham (sws) and his progeny.

In Sūrah al-Baqarah, the uprightness of Abraham (sws) and his reward are mentioned thus:

وَاِذِ ابۡتَلٰۤی اِبۡرٰهٖمَ رَبُّهٗ بِكَلِمٰتٍ فَاَتَمَّهُنَّ ؕ قَالَ اِنِّیۡ جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ اِمَامًا ؕ قَالَ وَمِنۡ ذُرِّیَّتِیۡ ؕ قَالَ لَا یَنَالُ عَهۡدِی الظّٰلِمِیۡنَ. (۲:۱۲۴)

And recall when Abraham was put to trial by His Lord in a few things and he fulfilled them. His Lord said: "I have decided to appoint you the leader of nations." "And what of my descendants?" asked Abraham. He replied: "My covenant does not apply to those who are unjust to themselves." (2:124)

The word كَلِمَات here obviously refers to the tests Abraham (sws) was put through and he passed them cent per cent. These tests are mentioned in detail in the Qur'ān and I have referred to them in the explanation of Sūrah al-Baqarah. In recognition of his success in these tests, he was given the title of *ṣiddīq* (upright) by God and was bestowed the leadership of nations by Him. At the same time, it was made clear to him that this status is not linked to lineage; on the contrary, it is linked to character

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and conduct. Only they among his progeny will deserve this status who are true to this title of their progenitor. Those who are unjust to their souls and become proponents of polytheism and disbelief will have no share in it, whether they are from the progeny of Isaac (sws) or Ishmael (sws).

All these implications of the word *ṣiddīq* must be understood in order to fully grasp the meaning of the verse under discussion. Without this understanding, the real purport of the discourse will not lost.

اِذْ قَالَ لِاَبِيْهِ يٰٓاَبَتِ لِمَ تَعْبُدُ مَا لَا يَسْمَعُ وَلَا يُبْصِرُ وَلَا يُغْنِيْ عَنْكَ شَيْـًٔا ﴿٤٢﴾ يٰٓاَبَتِ اِنِّيْ قَدْ جَآءَنِيْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَمْ يَاْتِكَ فَاتَّبِعْنِيْٓ اَهْدِكَ صِرَاطًا سَوِيًّا ﴿٤٣﴾ يٰٓاَبَتِ لَا تَعْبُدِ الشَّيْطٰنَ ؕ اِنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ عَصِيًّا ﴿٤٤﴾ يٰٓاَبَتِ اِنِّيْٓ اَخَافُ اَنْ يَّمَسَّكَ عَذَابٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمٰنِ فَتَكُوْنَ لِلشَّيْطٰنِ وَلِيًّا ﴿٤٥﴾[36]

This is a summary of Abraham's conversation with his father after he had been chosen as a messenger. The repetition of the word يٰٓاَبَتِ (O Father) shows how compassionately and affectionately he spoke to him. Evident from every sentence is the worry and love an obedient son should have for his father who has gone astray. Also evident from this is that Āzar is the name of Abraham's (sws) father and not his paternal uncle, as claimed by the Jews. This opinion has been accepted without much deliberation by our exegetes. Later the Sabā'ī's have created a propaganda from it. This view narrated in the Torah has been refuted by me earlier.[37]

In this speech about monothesim, Abraham (sws) in a logical sequence has directed the attention of his father to certain facts.

The very first thing he has questioned is the logic of worshipping idols carved with their own hands? Making someone a deity is not a matter of jest and entertainment. It relates to the biggest need of human beings. They believe in God and worship Him because He listens to their pleadings, delivers them from sorrows and helps them in every difficulty. So, what use to them are these self-carved idols they worship, which neither see nor hear nor are of any benefit to them? This, in other words, is a proof of polytheism being an absolute falsehood because its apparent form whatever its inner one clearly shows that it is blatant foolishness and has no relation to intellect and human nature.

The second thing he has said is that determining God's partners is not a matter of conjecture. A person believes in one God because his nature, intellect, the world inside

36. Recall, when he said to his father: "Father! Why do you worship those things that neither hear nor see and cannot be of any benefit to you? Dear Father! In truth, that knowledge has come to me which has not come to you. So, follow me, I shall show you the straight path. Father! Do not worship Satan. Surely, Satan is very defiant to God, the Most Gracious. Dear Father! I fear that some torment of the Most Gracious God may seize you and you end up becoming the companion of Satan."

37. See: *Tadabbur-i Qur'ān*, vol, 3, 88-89.

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him and the one around him bear witness to Him. Every person who is upright is compelled to believe in Him but what is the compulsion in believing in His partners without any reason? What can be relied upon in this matter is العلم ie. true knowledge which comes from God through divine revelation. Abraham (sws) called upon his father to not follow mere conjecture in such an important matter; rather he should follow him. He is presenting true knowledge to him which he has received from God. From this knowledge, guidance will be obtained for the straight path that takes people to God. The expression "straight path" means that this path will make a person independent of any means and take him directly to God. In other words, this path is the path of monotheism.

The third thing that he has explained is that as is evident from the account of Adam (sws) and Satan the greatest malice and enmity the latter has is for the straight path of monotheism. He has sworn that he will expend all his force to lead away the progeny of Adam (sws) from this straight path and make them entangled in polytheism. If a person faithfully obeys such a rebel of God, then this is like worshipping the rebel, and unfortunate are those who leave God and worship Satan.

The fourth thing which he has explained is that until then they had an excuse that God's guidance had not reached them but now that it has reached them, they do not have any excuse. Hence he fears that they will now be seized by God and by becoming companions of Satan reach the fate which is destined for his friends.

قَالَ اَرَاغِبٌ اَنْتَ عَنْ اٰلِهَتِیْ یٰۤاِبْرٰهِیْمُ ۚ لَىِٕنْ لَّمْ تَنْتَهِ لَاَرْجُمَنَّكَ وَاهْجُرْنِیْ مَلِیًّا ﴿۴۶﴾[38]

The word مَلِیًّا refers to a long interval of time. The actual expression in my opinion is وَاهْجُرْنِیْ هِجْرًا مَلِیًّا ie. get lost and never show your face to me again.

As soon as Āzar heard Abraham's speech, he became furious.

It should be kept in mind that in tribal societies, fathers had the same unlimited authority over their sons as masters had over their slaves. Just as masters could kill their slaves for a crime, in a similar way fathers could give any punishment to their sons and daugthers. No one could stop them if they wanted to kill them, stone them to death or bury them alive.

قَالَ سَلٰمٌ عَلَیْكَ ۚ سَاَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكَ رَبِّیْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ بِیْ حَفِیًّا ﴿۴۷﴾ وَاَعْتَزِلُكُمْ وَمَا تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَاَدْعُوْا رَبِّیْ ۖ عَسٰۤی اَلَّاۤ اَكُوْنَ بِدُعَآءِ رَبِّیْ شَقِیًّا ﴿۴۸﴾[39]

The word سَلٰمٌ here refers to the farewell salutation. Just as it is a very blessed way to

38. He replied: "Are you giving up my deities? If you do not desist, I shall stone you to death. So, get away me forever."

39. Abraham said: "Okay then peace be to you. I shall pray to my Lord to forgive you. He is very Merciful to me. I forsake you and those also that you worship besides God. And I shall only worship my Lord. I am hopeful that I shall not remain deprived after worshipping my Lord."

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greet people when meeting them, at the time of departing too it is a very affectionate way of expressing farewell.

The word حَفِيٌّ refers to someone who is very affectionate, caring and kind.

In spite of such a callous attitude from his father, the promise by Abraham (sws) to pray for his forgiveness shows how soft, sympathetic and loving he was. It is evident from other instances in the Qur'ān that he kept making this prayer until the Almighty stopped him.

However, besides this affection and sympathy, he was equally alive to the sense of honour a person should have for the cause of truth. He did not offer any compromise because of his gracious behaviour or because of any fear and expressly declared his acquittal from them and from their deities.

The emphasis, lack of concern at what people would say and trust in God is evident from every word of this declaration of acquittal by Abraham (sws). In the first place, Abraham (sws) used the plural form وَاَعْتَزِلُكُمْ which shows that he not only proclaimed acquittal from his father but also from all his companions, associates and members of the family. With it, by uttering the words وَمَا تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ (and those also whom you call instead of God) he included all their deities in the declaration. It was as if he rejected them as well. Then he did not merely give a negative statement. He followed it up with a positive one: وَاَدْعُوْا رَبِّيْ (I will only call my Lord) implying that he did not recognize any other deity. At the end, he expressed his unshakable trust in the Almighty by saying that he had never been deprived after calling his Lord and it was hoped that He would help and guide him in that trial as well. On the one hand, is this softness and, on the other, this sternness. It is in fact this amalgam of soft and stern attitude which distinguishes a preacher of truth from others. Unless a person is soft as wax and hard as a rock, he cannot serve the cause of truth in any way.

فَلَمَّا اعْتَزَلَهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ۙ وَهَبْنَا لَهٗۤ اِسْحٰقَ وَيَعْقُوْبَ ؕ وَكُلًّا جَعَلْنَا نَبِيًّا ﴿۴۹﴾[40]

The above stated declaration of Abraham (sws) was tantamount to migration. Thus after this proclamation he migrated from them. The way Isaac (sws) and Jacob (sws) are mentioned in the verse shows that they were born to Abraham (sws) as a reward for his migration. Someone who leaves his house, father and relatives for God is worthy of being lauded and rewarded. The purpose is to make the world see that those who make such sacrifices for God are blessed with majesty and splendour in this world. Thus Abraham (sws) was a recipient of these favours. Such was the splendour of his children who became prophets that each of them became the forerunner of a series of prophets in his descendents until the Day of Judgement. Jacob (sws) has been mentioned with Isaac (sws) even though he is a grand child of Abraham (sws) to show

40. Thus when he abandoned them and they also whom they worshipped instead of God, We blessed him with Isaac and Jacob and made each of them a prophet.

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that the father, the son and the grandson were all prophets. If Joseph (sws) is also added to this, a whole family of prophets can be seen. None except Abraham (sws) has this status in the annals of mankind.

A question may bother the mind here that among the progeny of Abraham (sws) only Isaac (sws) – from whom began a series of prophets the foremost – is mentioned but Ishmael (sws) is not mentioned. It was from him that the Ishmaelites sprung and to them belonged Muḥammad, the last and final prophet of God. This lack of mention seems queer too because the greatest blessing of migration – as proven by my mentor Imām Farāhī in his book *Fī man huwa al-dhabīḥ* – was Ishmael (sws). In my opinion, the reason for this lack of mention is that he is mentioned ahead independently. In this *sūrah*, as has been referred to earluer, the real addressees are the Idolaters of Arabia. The People of the Book are mentioned in a secondary manner. This entails that Ishmael (sws) be mentioned in an independent manner and not in a secondary one so that it fully engages the attention of the Arabs.

It should be kept in mind that Zacharias (sws) is mentioned as a prelude to the mention of Jesus (sws). John (sws) was born to him when he was very old and his wife was infertile. Then after mentioning the birth of Jesus (sws), Abraham (sws) was mentioned: he too was blessed with children in old age. Thus it is stated in the Qur'ān that when Abraham (sws) was given glad tidings of a child, his wife expressed amazement in precisely the same manner as the one expressed by Zacharias (sws) when he received glad tidings of John's birth. By alluding to both these prophets before and after mentioning Jesus (sws), the Qur'ān in a secondary way has informed people that examples of miraculous birth are exist before the times of Jesus (sws) too. Ascribing divinity to someone just because of this reason is mere foolishness.

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ رَّحْمَتِنَا وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ عَلِيًّا ﴿٥٠﴾[41]

The word رَّحْمَت refers to all the blessings and favours received by Abraham (sws) and his progeny including prophethood and messengerhood, the details of which have been mentioned in Sūrah al-Baqarah.

The word لِسَان means "fame" and "repute." The word صِدْق has the element of permanence in it. The expression لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ is similar to قَدَمَ صِدْقٍ (10:2). The implication is that God greatly augmented the effects of Abraham's preaching and he received such abiding respect and fame that thousands of years have passed ever since but it has not diminished. Hundreds and thousands of celebrated prophets and righteous people have arisen from this blessed clan and kept alive Abraham's mission. At the end, Muḥammad (sws) was assigned as God's messenger from the progeny of Ishmael (sws) to revive the teachings of Abraham (sws). As a result, that fame and loftiness has become eternal. All this is a result of Abraham's supplication mentioned thus in

41. And granted them a share of Our blessings and bestowed on them fame, lofty and permanent.

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verse 84 of Sūrah al-Shu‘arā’: وَاجْعَلْ لِّيْ لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ فِي الْاٰخِرِيْنَ.[42]

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتٰبِ مُوْسٰٓى ۡ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ مُخْلَصًا وَّكَانَ رَسُوْلًا نَّبِيًّا ﴿۵۱﴾[43]

After Abraham (sws), Moses (sws) is mentioned as a celebrated prophet among his descendents from Isaac (sws). The fact that he was a prophet and a messenger is very evident since he was sent in this capacity both to the Pharaoh (sws) and his nation and to the Israelites. The word مُخْلَص here refers to a very distinctive trait of his personality. This word is used for a person who is chosen for some special task. Considering this general meaning of the word, every prophet is a chosen person becase he is chosen for a divine mission. Thus it is stated about prophets in verse 46 of Sūrah Ṣu‘ād: اِنَّآ اَخْلَصْنٰهُمْ بِخَالِصَةٍ ذِكْرَى الدَّارِ.[44] The question thus arises about the nature of Moses’ distinctive trait specially when the title of مُخْلَص is not used for any prophet in the Qur’ān except him. In the opinion of this writer, the answer to this question is that this distinction relates to his singular status in conversing with God. Thus in verse 164 of Sūrah al-Nisā’ وَكَلَّمَ اللّٰهُ مُوْسٰى تَكْلِيْمًا (and God spoke to Moses directly) I have endeavoured to explain it. In the succeeding verse too, this aspect is referred to: وَقَرَّبْنٰهُ نَجِيًّا.[45] Calling him close to whisper was a distinction none else than Moses (sws) possessed.

وَنَادَيْنٰهُ مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّوْرِ الْاَيْمَنِ وَقَرَّبْنٰهُ نَجِيًّا ﴿۵۲﴾[46]

The word اَلْاَيْمَن means “the right side” as well as “sacred and blessed.” In my opinion here it refers to the latter meaning. This is evident from parallel verses of the Qur’ān. Thus, in Sūrah Ṭāhā, the words used are:

فَلَمَّآ اَتٰىهَا نُوْدِيَ يٰمُوْسٰٓى اِنِّيْٓ اَنَا رَبُّكَ فَاخْلَعْ نَعْلَيْكَ ۚ اِنَّكَ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى وَاَنَا اخْتَرْتُكَ فَاسْتَمِعْ لِمَا يُوْحٰى (۲۰:۱۱-۱۳)

Then when he reached near it, a voice called: “Moses! It is I, your Lord. So, take off your shoes because you are in the sacred valley of Ṭuwā. And I have chosen you. So, listen to what is being revealed to you.” (20:11-13)

It is evident from this that the voice heard by Moses (sws) was from the sacred valley of Ṭuwā. It was called sacred because it was here that God manifested His splendour before Moses (sws) and conversed with him. The sacred nature of this valley was something worthy of mention. There seems to be no logical reason to

42. And let those who come later continue to fondly remember me.

43. And mention the account of Moses in the Book. Indeed, he was a chosen person and a messenger and a prophet.

44. For a special mission – reminding of the Hereafter – We had deputed them.

45. And We called him close to whisper.

46. And We called him from the blessed side of Ṭūr and called him close to whisper.

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interpret the word to refer to its other meaning.

Consider next the expression: قَرَّبْنٰهُ نَجِيًّا. The word نَجِيٌّ means whispering in secrecy and also refes to the person who is spoken to through whispers and confided in. The word actually explains the distinction of Moses referred to in the previous verse. The conversation between God and Moses (sws) is termed as whispering in secrecy. The reason for this is that whenever God has spoken to his prophets, it is through His trusted angel Gabriel; never directly. This is a singular distinction Moses (sws) has. However, even at this instance he was not able to see God as per his desire. The reason for this is that in this universe no human being or jinn or even inanimate objects like mountains have the capacity to tolerate the splendour of God manifesting before them.

Details of the conversation that took place between God and Moses (sws) are not mentioned here. Sūrah Ṭāhā mentions them.

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهٗ مِنْ رَّحْمَتِنَآ اَخَاهُ هٰرُوْنَ نَبِيًّا ﴿۵۳﴾[47]

Another favour received by Moses (sws) was that he was helped in his mission of prophethood by his brother Aaron (sws). This help was not something voluntary on the part of Aaron (sws). He was deputed by a God as His prophet. Being helped by a prophet is also another distinction which no other prophet except Moses (sws) had. This favour was bestowed on him at his own request because he was assigned to a tyrant like the Pharaoh and to organize a worthless lot of people as the Israelites. He was anxious at this two-fold responsibility. He had prayed:

وَاجْعَلْ لِّيْ وَزِيْرًا مِّنْ اَهْلِيْ هٰرُوْنَ اَخِي اشْدُدْ بِهٖٓ اَزْرِيْ وَاَشْرِكْهُ فِيْٓ اَمْرِيْ كَيْ نُسَبِّحَكَ كَثِيْرًا وَّنَذْكُرَكَ كَثِيْرًا (۲۰:۲۹-۳۴)

He prayed: “Lord! Open my chest for me and make my task easy for me and free my tongue from its impediment so that people are able to understand what I say. And by appointing my brother Aaron from my family a helper for me strengthen my back, and make him share my responsibility so that as much as possible we are able to extol and glorify you and spread your word far and wide.” (20:29-34)

God accepted this prayer of Moses and this has been mentioned in Sūrah Ṭāhā as a great favour. In the verse under discussion, this favour is referred to as well. It may be kept in mind that the Jews had blamed Moses (sws) for some grave sins. However, the Qur’ān has presented him as a prophet who did not commit any such sins.

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتٰبِ اِسْمٰعِيْلَ ۚ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ صَادِقَ الْوَعْدِ وَكَانَ رَسُوْلًا نَّبِيًّا ﴿۵۴﴾[48]

Now Ishmael (sws), the head of the other branch of Abraham’s progeny, is

47. And with Our grace gave him his brother Aaron by making him a prophet.

48. And mention the account of Ishmael in the Book. Indeed, he was true to his promises and a messenger and a prophet.

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mentioned. The Quraysh claimed to be his descendents and followers of his religion. The first prophet in this branch was Ishmael (sws) and the last was Muḥammad (sws). The purpose of mentioning him was to urge the Idolaters of Arabia to reflect on the practice and message of Ishmael (sws) and how far they have gone away from them and still claim to be his true heirs. This arrogance has made them oppose the Qur'ān even though it reflects the message of Abraham (sws) and Ishmael (sws).

The expression صَادِقَ الْوَعْدِ refers to a special trait of Ishmael (sws): he was true to his promise. Obviously this refers to the promise he made with Abraham (sws) regarding his consent to be sacrificed. When Abraham (sws) asked his opinion about the dream he saw in which he was slaughtering him, he told him without any hesitation to go ahead and he will be steadfast in this commitment. When the time of fulfulling this promise arrived, without any reluctance, he placed his neck below the knife of his father. The knife was about to do its work when God stopped Abraham (sws) and informed him that it was just a test. Both were regarded to be upright and sincere by the Almighty.

In apparent form, the expression صَادِقَ الْوَعْدِ is composed of only two words. However, it is a comprenhesive portrayal of a true believer who submits to God. A servant of God who is true to what he has promised to Him and is prepared to sacrifice his life for it has truly attained the pinnacle of faith and submission to God. As for those who are indulging in gaining worldly benefits because of being descendents of Abraham (sws) and Ishmael (sws) and bragging about their association with them, they should see their hideous fate in the reflection of the mirror which the Qur'ān has placed before them

وَكَانَ يَأْمُرُ اَهْلَهٗ بِالصَّلٰوةِ وَالزَّكٰوةِ ۖ وَكَانَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهٖ مَرْضِيًّا ﴿٥٥﴾[49]

The extent of faith Ishmael (sws) had is evident from the trait with which he is referred to in the last verse. Now, people claiming to be his recipients are told that he would direct his followers to pray and pay *zakāh*. As referred to earlier, these two worship rituals comprehensively signify the all the rights of God as well as those of human beings. All the *sharī'ah* is based on these two worship rituals. He who adhered to them adhered to religion and he who neglected them neglected the whole of religion.

The words "he was a likeable person to His Lord" is a comprehensive statement of praise and needs no addition. Its true implication is that Ishmael (sws) was precisely what a servant of God should be in the sight of God. Who can be more outstanding a person than he about whom the Almighty himself bears witness that he conforms to His liking.

It may be kept in mind here that their frenzied enmity with Islam had made the Jews distort the history of Abraham (sws) and Ishmael (sws). In particular, they had hidden the history of the latter in such a way so that no one is able to get wind of it. However,

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49. He would urge his people to the prayer and the *zakāh* and was a likeable person to His Lord.

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my mentor Ḥamīd al-Dīn Farāhī has exposed all these distortions and interpolations and revived the history of both these celebrated personalities in his tract *Who was Sacrificed by Abraham.*[50] Those who would like study the true worth of the statements given by the Qur'ān about them are advised to deeply study this tract.

وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتٰبِ اِدْرِيْسَ ۡ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ صِدِّيْقًا نَّبِيًّا ۝ وَّرَفَعْنٰهُ مَكَانًا عَلِيًّا ۝[51]

I could find nothing reliable about Idrīs (sws) in the scriptures of the Jews and in Bible history. All that our past exegetes have written about him is based on conjecture and thus it is useless to cite it. The way the Qur'ān has mentioned him shows that he was mentioned in the scriptures of the People of the Book and all kinds of true and false stories circulated about him. Now, either just as many Arabicized names of prophets have changed their original forms so much that the name of Idrīs cannot be recognized or he was mentioned in the earliest copies of the Torah but later copies became devoid of this mention. It may also be kept in mind that the Torah vanished a number of times and was written a number of times through its oral redaction. For this reason, there exists discrepancies in its copies as well as there it has been a subject of continuous additions and deletions. In my opinion, just as the Qur'ān has shed light on a lot of lost content of the Torah – many examples of which have passed in earlier *sūrahs* – the case of Idrīs (sws) is one of these lost episodes recovered by the Qur'ān. His character too was an example for entire mankind. For this reason, the Qur'ān has mentioned him in his true perspective and revived his history.

He has been praised in exactly the same words as Abraham (sws): صِدِّيْق (upright). The implications of this trait has been elaborated earlier. Obviously, Idrīs (sws) would have gained this status after passing through may trials. What is also worth noting is that here is mentioned alongside Ishmael (sws), as is the case in verse 85 of Sūrah al-Anbiyā': وَاِسْمٰعِيْلَ وَاِدْرِيْسَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ ؕ كُلٌّ مِّنَ الصّٰبِرِيْنَ.[52] He too has been regarded as steadfast like Ishmael (sws). Deliberation on both these instances shows a deep similarity between both these prophets. For this reason, they are mentioned together. Both had to pass through tough trials in which they showed perseverance. As a reward for passing through these trials, Idrīs was given the lofty status the verse mentions.

اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ اَنْعَمَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنَ النَّبِيّٖنَ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّةِ اٰدَمَ ۗ وَمِمَّنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوْحٍ ۡ وَّمِنْ ذُرِّيَّةِ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَاِسْرَآءِيْلَ ۡ وَ

50. The book is originally in Arabic by the name *Fī man huwa al-Dhabīḥ* and its Urdu translation has been done by me.

51. And mention Idrīs in the Book. Indeed, he was an upright person and a prophet. And We made him rise to a lofty status.

52. And We also showed favour to Ishmael, Idrīs and Dhū al-Kifl. All these were among the steadfast.

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مِمَّنْ هَدَيْنَا وَاجْتَبَيْنَا ۚ إِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُ الرَّحْمَٰنِ خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا وَبُكِيًّا ﴿٥٨﴾ فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ أَضَاعُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَاتَّبَعُوا الشَّهَوَاتِ فَسَوْفَ يَلْقَوْنَ غَيًّا ﴿٥٩﴾[53]

These verses state the real purport for which all the previous prophetic accounts have been narrated. The addresses of the Qur'ān of those times – whether they were the Idolaters of Arabia or the People of the Book – all of them ascribed themselves to one of these prophets. They also believed that in the progeny of Adam (sws), Noah (sws), Abraham (sws) and Jacob (sws), it is these people who were the fountainheads of God's guidance. By referring to the preaching and character of all of them, the Qur'ān has expressed sorrow at their successors: they claimed to be the progeny of Abraham (sws) and Jacob (sws) and the followers of Moses (sws) and Jesus (sws) but they had distorted and disfigured the religion of these celebrated prophets.

The fact stated in the verse that when God's revelations would be cited to these prophets they would fall down in prostration while crying is a sarcastic comment on these followers. Their case would be the opposite: when the verses of the Qur'ān would be recited to them, they would arrogantly negate them and make fun of them.

The word خَلْفٌ here means "unworthy successors." The difference between خَلْفٌ and خَلَفٌ is that the latter is not used in the positive sense. The reason that they were called unworthy successors was that ascription to prophets and being their inheritors is not something that relates to lineage and family. It is relates to the guidance brought by them. Obviously after neglecting and forsaking the prayer, they lost the actual connection with religion. It is only the prayer if it is offered in the right way which reminds a person of the covenant he has made with his Lord. If it is forsaken, it is certain that a person will succumb to the lures of Satan. Details of what the Idolaters and the People of the Book did with this basic directive of religion have been mentioned in Sūrahs al-Baqarah, Āl-i 'Imrān and al-An'ām. Repetition will just prolong the discussion here.

A point worthy of note here is that it is not stated that they squandered the prayer and the *zakāh*; it is stated that they squandered the prayer and followed their desires. The worship ritual of *zakāh* is not stated here even though in the teachings of all prophets referred to earlier both the prayer and *zakāh* are mentioned. One does wonder why it was not stated that they squandered the *zakāh* as well. This change of style is referring to a specific fact: what actually stops a person from giving charity and spending in the way of God is his desires. Once a person stars to dwell in his

53. These are the people whom God blessed from among His messengers from among the progeny of Adam and from the progeny of those whom We had boarded with Noah and from the progeny of Abraham and Israel and from among those whom We guided and chose. When the revelations of the Merciful God were recited to them, they would prostrate and fall down weeping. Then, after them, those people succeeded them who squandered the prayer and followed their desires. So, soon they will face the consequences of going astray.

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desires, he becomes a slave to them to the extent that he is not left with the capacity to spend in the way of God. In other words, here the real motive that stops a person from charity is pointed out.

The verb in فَسَوْفَ يَلْقَوْنَ غَيًّا actually signifies its consequence. In other words, they will meet their deviance actually means that they will encounter the consequence of their deviance. This refers to the fact that in the hereafter they will reap what they had sown in this world and no injustice will be done to them.

إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا ﴿٦٠﴾ جَنَّاتِ عَدْنٍ الَّتِي وَعَدَ الرَّحْمَٰنُ عِبَادَهُ بِالْغَيْبِ ۚ إِنَّهُ كَانَ وَعْدُهُ مَأْتِيًّا ﴿٦١﴾ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا إِلَّا سَلَامًا ۖ وَلَهُمْ رِزْقُهُمْ فِيهَا بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيًّا ﴿٦٢﴾ تِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي نُورِثُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا مَنْ كَانَ تَقِيًّا ﴿٦٣﴾[54]

The word مَأْتِيًّا signifies that the promised fate mentioned will necessarily be met by every person. No one should have any doubt about it

The verse states that the clatter of opposition and animosity against the truth and its bearers so rampant here will be silenced the next world. People will not hear any foolish talk there. They will merrily greet one another. Angels too will congratulate the dwellers of Paradise.

The expression بُكْرَةً وَّ عَشِيًّا (morning and evening) obviously refers to the mornings and evenings of Paradise, the reality of which will only become evident there. The sustenance referred to her for the believers will be that they will be able to see God and earn His attention and affection. Had it not been the fear to prolong the discussion, I would have cited certain narratives in which this topic is effectively elaborated. The word sustenance (رِزْق) is used for blessings of God and His favours at certain instances in the Qur'ān (see, for example verse 37 of Sūrah Āl-i 'Imrān). Other divine scriptures too use this word in this connotation.

The implication of the last verse is that not every person who claims to go to Paradise will actually go there. Only they will go there who abide by the limits of God. This sentence is a sarcastic remark on those who had totally routed God's religion but still staked a claim for Paradise.

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54. Only those are an exception to this who repent, accept faith and do righteous deeds. It is these people who shall enter Paradise and shall not face the slightest injustice. Eternal orchards promised to His servants by the Most Merciful God in that world which is hidden from the eyes. Indeed, His promise is destined to be fulfilled. They shall not hear any nonsensical talk in it. Salutations of peace shall be there for them everywhere. Their sustenance shall be available in it for them morning and evening. This is the Paradise that We shall give in inheritance to those among Our servants who fear God.

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Section V: Verses (64-98)

Coming up are the closing verses of the *sūrah*. First, through the tongue of Gabriel, the Prophet (sws) is urged to be steadfast. After that, the rejecters of the Day of Judgement are rebuked. In particular, they are censured for their view that since in this world they have a superior status in this world than the believers, they regard themselves to be more guided and if ever there is going to be a Judgement Day they will have this same status through the help of their intercessors and partners of God. In the end, the Prophet (sws) is urged to disregard the demand of people to show them the punishment and through the Qur'ān warn and give glad tidings to the God-fearing among them. He must depend on the Qur'ān for this purpose as it has appropriate guidance for them in every phase of delivering the truth to them. As for those who are stubborn and obdurate, he must inform them of their fate. They will meet this fate if they persist on this attitude and he will be responsible for them.

Readers may study now these verses in the light of this background.

Text and Translation

وَمَا نَتَنَزَّلُ اِلَّا بِاَمۡرِ رَبِّكَ ۚ لَهٗ مَا بَيۡنَ اَيۡدِيۡنَا وَمَا خَلۡفَنَا وَمَا بَيۡنَ ذٰلِكَ ۚ وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ نَسِيًّا ﴿۶۴﴾ رَبُّ
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالۡاَرۡضِ وَمَا بَيۡنَهُمَا فَاعۡبُدۡهُ وَاصۡطَبِرۡ لِعِبَادَتِهٖ ؕ هَلۡ تَعۡلَمُ لَهٗ سَمِيًّا ﴿۶۵﴾ وَيَقُوۡلُ الۡاِنۡسَانُ ءَاِذَا مَا
مِتُّ لَسَوۡفَ اُخۡرَجُ حَيًّا ﴿۶۶﴾ اَوَلَا يَذۡكُرُ الۡاِنۡسَانُ اَنَّا خَلَقۡنٰهُ مِنۡ قَبۡلُ وَلَمۡ يَكُ شَيۡـًٔا ﴿۶۷﴾ فَوَرَبِّكَ لَنَحۡشُرَنَّهُمۡ وَ
الشَّيٰطِيۡنَ ثُمَّ لَنُحۡضِرَنَّهُمۡ حَوۡلَ جَهَنَّمَ جِثِيًّا ﴿۶۸﴾ ثُمَّ لَنَنۡزِعَنَّ مِنۡ كُلِّ شِيۡعَةٍ اَيُّهُمۡ اَشَدُّ عَلَى الرَّحۡمٰنِ عِتِيًّا ﴿۶۹﴾ ثُمَّ
لَنَحۡنُ اَعۡلَمُ بِالَّذِيۡنَ هُمۡ اَوۡلٰى بِهَا صِلِيًّا ﴿۷۰﴾ وَاِنۡ مِّنۡكُمۡ اِلَّا وَارِدُهَا ۚ كَانَ عَلٰى رَبِّكَ حَتۡمًا مَّقۡضِيًّا ﴿۷۱﴾ ثُمَّ نُنَجِّى
الَّذِيۡنَ اتَّقَوۡا وَّنَذَرُ الظّٰلِمِيۡنَ فِيۡهَا جِثِيًّا ﴿۷۲﴾ وَاِذَا تُتۡلٰى عَلَيۡهِمۡ اٰيٰتُنَا بَيِّنٰتٍ قَالَ الَّذِيۡنَ كَفَرُوۡا لِلَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡۤا ۙ
اَىُّ الۡفَرِيۡقَيۡنِ خَيۡرٌ مَّقَامًا وَّاَحۡسَنُ نَدِيًّا ﴿۷۳﴾ وَكَمۡ اَهۡلَكۡنَا قَبۡلَهُمۡ مِّنۡ قَرۡنٍ هُمۡ اَحۡسَنُ اَثَاثًا وَّرِءۡيًا ﴿۷۴﴾ قُلۡ مَنۡ
كَانَ فِى الضَّلٰلَةِ فَلۡيَمۡدُدۡ لَهُ الرَّحۡمٰنُ مَدًّا ۚ حَتّٰۤى اِذَا رَاَوۡا مَا يُوۡعَدُوۡنَ اِمَّا الۡعَذَابَ وَاِمَّا السَّاعَةَ ؕ فَسَيَعۡلَمُوۡنَ
مَنۡ هُوَ شَرٌّ مَّكَانًا وَّاَضۡعَفُ جُنۡدًا ﴿۷۵﴾ وَيَزِيۡدُ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيۡنَ اهۡتَدَوۡا هُدًى ؕ وَالۡبٰقِيٰتُ الصّٰلِحٰتُ خَيۡرٌ عِنۡدَ رَبِّكَ
ثَوَابًا وَّخَيۡرٌ مَّرَدًّا ﴿۷۶﴾ اَفَرَءَيۡتَ الَّذِىۡ كَفَرَ بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَقَالَ لَاُوۡتَيَنَّ مَالًا وَّوَلَدًا ﴿۷۷﴾ اَطَّلَعَ الۡغَيۡبَ اَمِ اتَّخَذَ عِنۡدَ
الرَّحۡمٰنِ عَهۡدًا ﴿۷۸﴾ كَلَّا ؕ سَنَكۡتُبُ مَا يَقُوۡلُ وَنَمُدُّ لَهٗ مِنَ الۡعَذَابِ مَدًّا ﴿۷۹﴾ وَّنَرِثُهٗ مَا يَقُوۡلُ وَيَاۡتِيۡنَا فَرۡدًا ﴿۸۰﴾ وَ
اتَّخَذُوۡا مِنۡ دُوۡنِ اللّٰهِ اٰلِهَةً لِّيَكُوۡنُوۡا لَهُمۡ عِزًّا ﴿۸۱﴾ كَلَّا ؕ سَيَكۡفُرُوۡنَ بِعِبَادَتِهِمۡ وَيَكُوۡنُوۡنَ عَلَيۡهِمۡ ضِدًّا ﴿۸۲﴾ اَلَمۡ

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تَرَ اَنَّـآ اَرْسَلْنَا الشَّيٰطِيْنَ عَلَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ تَؤُزُّهُمْ اَزًّا ﴿٨٣﴾ فَلَا تَعْجَلْ عَلَيْهِمْ ؕ اِنَّمَا نَعُدُّ لَهُمْ عَدًّا ﴿٨٤﴾ يَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ
الْمُتَّقِيْنَ اِلَى الرَّحْمٰنِ وَفْدًا ﴿٨٥﴾ وَّنَسُوْقُ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ اِلٰى جَهَنَّمَ وِرْدًا ﴿٨٦﴾ لَا يَمْلِكُوْنَ الشَّفَاعَةَ اِلَّا مَنِ اتَّخَذَ
عِنْدَ الرَّحْمٰنِ عَهْدًا ﴿٨٧﴾ وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمٰنُ وَلَدًا ﴿٨٨﴾ لَقَدْ جِئْتُمْ شَيْـًٔا اِدًّا ﴿٨٩﴾ تَكَادُ السَّمٰوٰتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ
مِنْهُ وَتَنْشَقُّ الْاَرْضُ وَتَخِرُّ الْجِبَالُ هَدًّا ﴿٩٠﴾ اَنْ دَعَوْا لِلرَّحْمٰنِ وَلَدًا ﴿٩١﴾ وَمَا يَنْۢبَغِيْ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ اَنْ يَّتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا ﴿٩٢﴾
اِنْ كُلُّ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ اِلَّاۤ اٰتِي الرَّحْمٰنِ عَبْدًا ﴿٩٣﴾ لَقَدْ اَحْصٰهُمْ وَعَدَّهُمْ عَدًّا ﴿٩٤﴾ وَكُلُّهُمْ اٰتِيْهِ يَوْمَ
الْقِيٰمَةِ فَرْدًا ﴿٩٥﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمٰنُ وُدًّا ﴿٩٦﴾ فَاِنَّمَا يَسَّرْنٰهُ بِلِسَانِكَ
لِتُبَشِّرَ بِهِ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ وَتُنْذِرَ بِهٖ قَوْمًا لُّدًّا ﴿٩٧﴾ وَكَمْ اَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْنٍ ؕ هَلْ تُحِسُّ مِنْهُمْ مِّنْ اَحَدٍ اَوْ
تَسْمَعُ لَهُمْ رِكْزًا ﴿٩٨﴾

And We descend only at the directive of your Lord. Whatever is in front of us and behind us and what is in between, all is under His control. And your Lord does not forget anything. He is the master of the heavens and the earth and of all that lies in between them. So, worship Him alone and adhere to His worship. Is there anyone similar to Him in your knowledge? (64-65)

And man says: "Will I be taken out and given life again after I die?" Does this man not remember that We have created him before when he was nothing. So, by your Lord! We shall surely gather them too and their devils also. Then We shall bring them forth around Hell such that they will be sitting on their knees. Then from each group We shall sort people by separating those who remained the most rebellious against the Most Merciful God. Then We would be the most aware of those most worthy of entering this Hell. [And We shall order them:] "Each of one you shall surely enter it. This is a matter decided fulfilling which is the responsibility of your Lord." (66-71)

Then We shall save those who feared God, and those who were unjust to their souls, We shall leave them sitting in it on their knees. (72)

And when Our clear revelations are recited out to them, those who have disbelieved ask the believers: "Tell us which among our two groups is better in rank and social status?" And how many a nation before them have We destroyed who were far greater than them in possessions and in majesty and splendour. Tell them: Those who persist in error, the dealing of God [with them] is that He grants them full respite until when they see the thing they are being promised – whether it is God's torment or the hour of judgement – they will know who is the worst in status and weakest in helpers. (73-75)

And God increases the guidance of those who adopt the path of guidance, and good deeds that remain are better before your Lord with regard to reward as well as their consequence. (76)

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Then have you seen that person who rejected Our revelations and claimed: "I shall also be blessed with wealth and children in the Hereafter." Has he peeped into the Unseen or has he taken a promise from the Most Merciful? Certainly not! Whatever nonsense he utters, We shall write it down and increase His torment and We shall inherit the things he lays claim to and he shall come before Us alone. (77-80)

And they have set up deities besides God so that they may be of support to them. Certainly not! They will deny their worship and become their enemies. (81-82)

Have you not seen that We have let loose devils on the disbelievers. They are enticing them a lot. So, do not show haste that their matter be decided. We are fully counting for them. (83-84)

Remember the day when We shall bring the God-fearing towards the Most Merciful God in groups and drive the wrongdoers towards Hell thirsty. On that day, no one will have authority to intercession except he who has taken a promise from the Most Merciful. (85-87)

And they say: "The Most Merciful God has children." Very grave is this statement you have given. It may well be that the heavens tear apart, the earth is rent asunder and the mountains collapse to the ground with an explosion that they have ascribed children to the Most Merciful God. And it is not befitting for the Most Merciful to make anyone His children. And whoever are in the heavens and the earth, all will be brought forth in the presence of the Most Merciful as none but His servants. He has surrounded them all and He has fully counted them. And each of them shall come forth before Him alone. However, those who have accepted faith and done righteous deeds, for them the Most Merciful shall soon create love and affection. (88-96)

Thus We have made this Book easy and apt for you in your language so that through it you may give glad tidings to the God-fearing and warn this belligerent nation. And how many a nation have We destroyed before them. Do you feel any of them or hear their slight mention? (97-98).

Explanation

وَمَا نَتَنَزَّلُ اِلَّا بِاَمۡرِ رَبِّكَ ۚ لَهٗ مَا بَيۡنَ اَيۡدِيۡنَا وَمَا خَلۡفَنَا وَمَا بَيۡنَ ذٰلِكَ ۚ وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ نَسِيًّا ﴿۶۴﴾ رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالۡاَرۡضِ وَ مَا بَيۡنَهُمَا فَاعۡبُدۡهُ وَاصۡطَبِرۡ لِعِبَادَتِهٖ ؕ هَلۡ تَعۡلَمُ لَهٗ سَمِيًّا ﴿۶۵﴾[55]

These words are from the tongue of Gabriel. He has urged the Prophet (sws) to show patience and steadfastness. He has also clarified his own status and that of the other angels that they are not in a position to do anything on their own: they only obey

55. And We descend only at the directive of your Lord. Whatever is in front of us and behind us and what is in between, all is under His control. And your Lord does not forget anything. He is the master of the heavens and the earth and of all that lies in between them. So, worship Him alone and adhere to His worship. Is there anyone similar to Him in your knowledge?

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God's directives. There is a special background to this advice and explanation given by him: the sole support for the Prophet (sws) against his opponents in this phase of conflict with his opponents was divine revelation. It was through this divine help that he would receive strength and was also able to answer all kinds of objections raised by them and check their mischief-mongering. Thus quite naturally he would anxiously wait for Gabriel to bring divine revelation in this phase. This anxiety was a natural outcome of the circumstances he was passing through. A soldier who is at the front fighting a huge army always waits for fresh guidance from the centre lest he may not take a wrong step. However, every work of God is based on the wisdom only He knows. For this reason, the Prophet (sws) has been asked to wait and show patience on this anxiety at various instances in the Qur'ān. He should adhere to his stance and not show haste. He will receive the guidance and help he needs at their appropriate times. In verse 114 of Sūrah Ṭāhā, the words thus used are: وَلَا تَعۡجَلۡ بِالۡقُرۡاٰنِ مِنۡ قَبۡلِ اَنۡ يُّقۡضٰٓى اِلَيۡكَ وَحۡيُهٗ ۡ وَقُلۡ رَّبِّ زِدۡنِىۡ عِلۡمًا.[56] This topic is discussed at other instances in the Qur'ān too. However, here it is conveyed through the tongue of Gabriel that has enhanced its eloquence. I would like to allude to some of its aspects:

The first thing worthy of note here is that Gabriel has actually presented a type of apology to the Prophet (sws) that his coming with divine revelation is based on God's command. In other words, if angels do not come in quick succession to quench the Prophet's (sws) desire and to end his wait, it is not because of some error on their part. Unless they are directed by God, they can neither descend to him nor bring down revelation to him. They have no say in this and are wholly under God's command.

The second thing worthy of note is that the status of Gabriel and the whole group of angels becomes evident: everything that is in front of and behind them and in between them is under the total control and protection of God. There is not the slightest possibility that anyone of them dare exceed his limits or carry out a plan out of his own will. God is not forgetful that anyone of them can use this forgetfulness to his advantage and implement his own will and still remain unpunished. The reason for explaining this status of the angels was to refute the notion of the Arab polytheists who worshipped angels and thought that if ever the Hereafter came these daughters of God would save them from the wrath of their father by interceding for them. By reciting this statement of Gabriel, these foolish people are informed that when in the court of the Almighty, Gabriel – the leader of all angels – occupies this frail position, it can well be imagined what power other angels have.

Regarding the words "and your Lord does not forget anything" my mind goes to another aspect too: the Prophet (sws) is assured that if there is any delay in divine revelation, it is based on some wisdom or expediency because his Lord does not forget anything. He is fully aware of all circumstances and problems as well of each and

56. And do not show haste in acquiring the Qur'ān before its revelation is complete and keep praying: My Lord! Increase my knowledge further.

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every supplication made to Him. There is no question of Him overlooking anything.

Consider next the verse: رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الۡاَرۡضِ وَ مَا بَيۡنَهُمَا فَاعۡبُدۡهُ وَ اصۡطَبِرۡ لِعِبَادَتِهٖ ؕ هَلۡ تَعۡلَمُ لَهٗ سَمِيًّا. The word سَمِيٌّ means "similar" and "peer." These words can be part of Gabriel's speech and can also be an insertion from God. Examples of such insertions abound in the Qur'ān. Whatever of the two probabilities one considers, the only difference will be of that of the speaker. There will be no difference in the purport of the words. Even this difference is nominal since whatever Gabriel says is at God's behest. God asked him to clarify his excuse regarding divine revelation and he complied.

My own inclination is towards the first probability. It is Gabriel who urged the Prophet (sws) to wait and exercise patience for he was being looked after by someone who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that lies between them and not by someone ordinary. Thus he should adhere to His worship with full perseverance. Context and occasion show that here worhsip is used in its wider connotation and also includes obedience. I have already explained the essence of this word in Sūrah al-Fātiḥah. In verse 44 of this *sūrah* too, it implies obedience.

The word اِصۡطِبَار used is used in place of صَبۡر. It has a greater amount of stress in it. It should be kept in mind that increase in letters of a word magnifies its meaning too. Moreover, when the preposition ل occurs after either of these words in this way, they encompass the meaning of "to wait." It is not easy to unfold these understood aspects of the verse in a translation. In Sūrah Ṭāhā, under the relevant verses, I will further elaborate on it.

The last part of the verse implies that when there is no peer or match of God, who can hinder His intentions to materialize. The Prophet (sws) should continue with his work. God will ease away his hardships and implement all His intentions.

وَيَقُوۡلُ الۡاِنۡسَانُ ءَاِذَا مَا مِتُّ لَسَوۡفَ اُخۡرَجُ حَيًّا ﴿۶۶﴾[57]

Gabriel's words end here and it is now the Almighty Who begins His speech. After urging the Prophet (sws) to wait and show perseverance, the real reason of denial of his adversaries is referred to in their own words. Later it is refuted. Though a general word اِنۡسَان is used, concomitant indications show that it refers to the Idolaters of Arabia who were denying the Day of Judgement by regarding it to be improbable. A general word is used to express disgust. It is as if they are not worthy of being addressed.

As has been explained at other instances, the Idolaters of Arabia did not expressly deny the Day of Judgement. They held contradictory views about it. They believed that God gives life and death but regarded it to be farfetched that after dying people would be raised to life again and held accountable for their deeds. Their affluent were under the misconception that if ever the Day of Judgement comes, they will have the same status as they have here. They also had great trust in their deities. They regarded

57. And man says: "Will I be taken out and given life again after I die?"

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them to be daughters of God and reckoned that if the Day comes, these deities will exempt them from accountability. If these contradictory views of the Idolaters are kept in mind, readers will understand the subsequent topics dicussed by the Qur'ān.

اَوَلَا يَذْكُرُ الْاِنْسَانُ اَنَّا خَلَقْنٰهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَمْ يَكُ شَيْـًٔا ﴿٦٧﴾[58]

Attention here is directed at the contradictory views held by the Idolaters: when they cannot deny that God has created mankind from nothingness, why do regard being created again as something far-fetched. When He can created from "nothing," how can it become difficult for him to create from "something."

فَوَرَبِّكَ لَنَحْشُرَنَّهُمْ وَالشَّيٰطِيْنَ ثُمَّ لَنُحْضِرَنَّهُمْ حَوْلَ جَهَنَّمَ جِثِيًّا ﴿٦٨﴾[59]

Concomitant indications show that the word "devils" here encompasses both devils among men and the jinn. It is known that the Arabs also used to worship many jinn. Similarly, their deviant leaders also had led them astray and they blindly followed them. Moreover, when God's messenger asked them to open their eyes, they tried to harass and harm him.

The word جِثِيٌّ is the plural of جاث. The verb جثا means to sit on one's knees. This is the sitting posiition of criminals – just as criminals sit before a ruler to hear his verdict.

These criminals will await the decision regarding the part of Hell they will be consigned to. This is communicated to them in the form of an oath.

ثُمَّ لَنَنْزِعَنَّ مِنْ كُلِّ شِيْعَةٍ اَيُّهُمْ اَشَدُّ عَلَى الرَّحْمٰنِ عِتِيًّا ﴿٦٩﴾[60]

The deviant leaders will be isolated from the masses. The purpose would be to make them lead their followers to Hell just as they led them astray in the previous world. Each person will enter the section of Hell he deserves.

ثُمَّ لَنَحْنُ اَعْلَمُ بِالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ اَوْلٰى بِهَا صِلِيًّا ﴿٧٠﴾[61]

None else that God will know more about who deserves which section of Hell. He will not need to consult anyone in this regard. None will be in a position to say to God that he is more knowledgeable than Him and hence his intercession must be taken into consideration. This is a subtle sarcasm on the wrong belief of intercession held by the idolaters: only he can intercede before God who can claim that he is more informed

58. Does this man not remember that We have created him before when he was nothing.

59. So, by your Lord! We shall surely gather them too and their devils also. Then We shall bring them forth around Hell such that they will be sitting on their knees.

60. Then from each group We shall sort people by separating those who remained the most rebellious against the Most Merciful God.

61. Then We would be the most aware of those most worthy of entering this Hell.

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than Him. Now who can be a bigger megalomaniac than he who can tell God that he knows more about someone; that he is very pious; so do not say anything to him and send him to Paradise directly.

وَاِنْ مِّنْكُمْ اِلَّا وَارِدُهَا ۚ كَانَ عَلٰى رَبِّكَ حَتْمًا مَّقْضِيًّا ۝[62]

The word حَتْم means "to be incumbent." The address here is to the Idolaters which are under discussion since the previous verses. Earlier they were referred to indirectly. Here they are directly addressed. Both these styles have their own benefits. Just as indirect mention signifies ignoring someone, direct address signifies great anger. There are several examples of a shift in address from indirect to direct in the Qur'ān and classical Arabic literature. An example is verse 89 of this very *sūrah*. In the verse under discussion too, a similar shift in address has taken place. Since the purpose is to express immense anger for these wrongdoers, God will directly address them and order them to enter Hell without any exception, for the time to present excuses and pleas has expired. At the same time, the Prophet (sws) is told that this matter is certain to take place. It has been made incumbent by God on Himself. The Prophet (sws) will observe the fate of his enemies from his very eyes.

This interpretation of the verse is extremely evident. However, our exegetes have regarded this verse to address all mankind. Thus they regard everyone whether, pious or wrongdoer to pass through Hell. The only compensation for the former would be that they would be able to pass over the bridge which will be erected between the two ends of Hell. The latter however, will fall in the pit of Hell. This misconception has arisen by not understanding the style adopted here. In fact, most erroneous interpretations are the result of such misunderstandings. It is strange that they could not recollect the following verse of the Qur'ān while making such a grave statement that the righteous too would pass through Hell:

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُمْ مِّنَّا الْحُسْنٰٓى ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ عَنْهَا مُبْعَدُوْنَ لَا يَسْمَعُوْنَ حَسِيْسَهَا ۚ وَهُمْ فِيْ مَا اشْتَهَتْ اَنْفُسُهُمْ خٰلِدُوْنَ لَا يَحْزُنُهُمُ الْفَزَعُ الْاَكْبَرُ وَتَتَلَقّٰىهُمُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ ۭ هٰذَا يَوْمُكُمُ الَّذِيْ كُنْتُمْ تُوْعَدُوْنَ (۲۱:۱۰۱-۱۰۳)

Indeed those who have been promised a good fate by Us shall be kept away from it. They shall not even listen to its sound and shall forever remain in the bliss they desire. That great commotion of that day shall not afflict them with grief and the angels will welcome them. They will say: "This is that day of yours which you were being promised of." (21:101-103)

In order to safeguard against such errors of interpretation, my advice to serious

62. [And We shall order them:] "Each of one you shall surely enter it. This is a matter decided fulfilling which is the responsibility of your Lord."

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students of the Qur'ān is to study Imām Farāhī's tract *Asālīb al-Qur'ān*.

ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا وَّنَذَرُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ فِيْهَا جِثِيًّا ﴿۷۲﴾[63]

The word ثُمَّ expresses sequence. In other words, God will first deal with the wrongdoers. After consigning them to Hell, He will turn to those who feared Him. Saving the God-fearing here does not mean saving them from Hell because they will not even hear its sound, as referred to earlier. Here the implication is that God will save them from all the worries and waits which they may harbour before reaching their ultimate destination.

It has already been explained that the word جِثِيٌّ refers to the wrongdoers who will sit on their knees waiting for their verdict. In the verse 68, this usage is quite evident. However, here its use does raise a question because the word فِيْهَا would mean that they will be in Hell. However, it is evident from other instances of the Qur'ān that they will cry and scream in Hell and not sit on their knees. To avoid this complication, our exegetes have changed the meaning of this word. This change is against its lexical usage and hence I do not agree with it. In my opinion, here this word is used for the situation when after God's judgement they will be consigned to the keepers of Hell and will await the gates of Hell to be opened. The implication is that God will show His utter indifference to them by leaving them in this situation after which the gates of punishment will be opened for them

وَاِذَا تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتُنَا بَيِّنٰتٍ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا ۙ اَيُّ الْفَرِيْقَيْنِ خَيْرٌ مَّقَامًا وَّاَحْسَنُ نَدِيًّا ﴿۷۳﴾[64]

This is an excuse the wrongdoers would present when the Qur'ān would be recited before them: since in this world they have a superior status, why should they think that they deserve the wrath of God and a punishment will visit them; on the contrary, this shows that they have more respect before God than the believers. They have been given all these things an while the believers do not have them.

وَكَمْ اَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْنٍ هُمْ اَحْسَنُ اَثَاثًا وَّرِءْيًا ﴿۷۴﴾[65]

The word قَرْن refers to "people of one era" as well as to a "nation."

These people who were arguing are told that possessing great means and resources and majesty and splendour is neither because a nation is close to God nor will these

63. Then We shall save those who feared God, and those who were unjust to their souls, We shall leave them sitting in it on their knees.

64. And when Our clear revelations are recited out to them, those who have disbelieved ask the believers: "Tell us which among our two groups is better in rank and social status?"

65. And how many a nation before them have We destroyed who were far greater than them in possessions and in majesty and splendour.

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things save it from God's grasp. The fate of previous nations bears witness to this. Though these nations are not named here; other *sūrahs* name them.

قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الضَّلٰلَةِ فَلْيَمْدُدْ لَهُ الرَّحْمٰنُ مَدًّا ۚ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا رَاَوْا مَا يُوْعَدُوْنَ اِمَّا الْعَذَابَ وَاِمَّا السَّاعَةَ ۭ فَسَيَعْلَمُوْنَ مَنْ هُوَ شَرٌّ مَّكَانًا وَّاَضْعَفُ جُنْدًا ﴿۷۵﴾[66]

This verse expresses the established practice of God regarding the defiant and the rebellious. The Prophet (sws) is asked to convey what the words of the verse say to these people who had become arrogant because of worldly riches.

God is not a weak being so that if He does not catch the arrogant immediately they will run away. His planning is very secure. He keeps giving respite until either the punishment that is ordained to visit those who deny their messenger visits them or the Day of Judgment appears.

A few things are noteworthy in this verse:

First, the style adopted in فَلْيَمْدُدْ. It was not stated that God gives them respite. On the contrary, this word means that the dealing of God is that it is only worthy for the Most Merciful to give them respite. In other words, giving respite to the wrongdoers is a requisite of God's power, wisdom and planning. Unfortunate are the people who regard this respite to be their success and become even more rebellious.

Second, here two things are mentioned "the Punishment" and the "Hour." When both these are stated together, the first refers to worldly punishment and the second to the next-worldly punishment. All messengers of God have warned their people of two punishments. It has been explained at other instances that when a nation denies its messenger, it is necessarily destroyed after the truth is conclusively communicated to it.

Third, superlatives are at times used without comparison.

Another thing worthy of note is that just as the foolish among the Arabs of the *jāhiliyyah* period did not give much importance to God and the Hereafter, men of science and learning of current times also because of their arrogance regard these realities to be figments of imagination. In the recent past, a friend mentioned to me that if God and the Hereafter are discussed before the people residing in the US, they reply that their average age is more than the ones in the subcontinent. Had their claim been true, their average age should have been more. At this I replied that not only their average age is more but the suicide rate is also more. Even now they have not been able to dispense with the angel of death. What has happened is that they have actually taken up his task.

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66. Tell them: Those who persist in error, the dealing of God [with them] is that He grants them full respite until when they see the thing they are being promised – whether it is God's torment or the hour of judgement – they will know who is the worst in status and weakest in helpers.

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وَيَزِيْدُ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اهْتَدَوْا هُدًى ؕ وَالْبٰقِيٰتُ الصّٰلِحٰتُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَّ خَيْرٌ مَّرَدًّا ﴿۷۶﴾[67]

This verse occurs in parallel to the previous one. In other words, just as God gives respite to those who give preference to deviance over guidance, in the same way, He continues to give more guidance to people who adopt guidance. A sane person does not give much importance to immediate gain; he gives more weight to deeds which are more rewarding and better as regard their fate. Slaves of this world only see immediate gains have no concern with what will happen after death. On the other hand, the eyes of a believer are focused on what will happen in the hereafter. He evaluates all his deeds in the light of their potential consequences.

This verse assures the believers and tells them to ignore these people who show pride because of their worldly possessions. Though they do not possess wealth and assets, their guidance is increasing by the day and what they are gathering in the form of good deeds is guaranteeing the eternal kingdom of God for them in the hereafter. On other hand, the wealth and assets gathered or is being gathered by their opponents will become the fuel of Hell for them.

I have translated the word مَّرَدًّا as consequence and his translation is very close to the real essence of the word.

In the Qur'ān righteous deeds are named as الْبٰقِيٰتُ الصّٰلِحٰتُ at many instances. It is evident from this that only those deeds are righteous which are eternal and abiding. Deeds which are meant for a small period of time and are not eternal cannot be deemed as righteous. As for the question which deeds are eternal and which ones are not, the answer to this is that the latter are the ones which are done while keeping the objectives of this worldly life in mind; they are not eternal because this world is not eternal. Eternal deeds are only those which are done solely for God and the Hereafter because God is eternal and so is the Hereafter.

اَفَرَءَيْتَ الَّذِيْ كَفَرَ بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَقَالَ لَاُوْتَيَنَّ مَالًا وَّ وَلَدًا ﴿۷۷﴾ اَطَّلَعَ الْغَيْبَ اَمِ اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمٰنِ عَهْدًا ﴿۷۸﴾[68]

Here the Qur'ān has cited another misconception of the disbelievers and refuted it. The statement of this misconception begins by the word اَفَرَءَيْتَ. Those who have a taste of the Arabic language know that when the address begins with this word, then it means that a person who has delusions of grandeur about himself or something very foolish is being referred to.

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67. And God increases the guidance of those who adopt the path of guidance, and good deeds that remain are better before your Lord with regard to reward as well as their consequence.

68. Then have you seen that person who rejected Our revelations and claimed: "I shall also be blessed with wealth and children in the Hereafter." Has he peeped into the Unseen or has he taken a promise from the Most Merciful?

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An Arabic style that readers must keep in their minds is that it is not essential that the word الَّذِیْ always occur for some definite noun. At times, it also occurs for a similitude, some very eloquent examples of which are found in the Qur'ān.[69] On such occasions, it does not refer to any specific person. Here its purpose is to cite the example of a specific mentality or a character. In the verse under discussion also, it does not refer to any person; it portrays the mentality of a particular group.

People referred to in this similitude do not regard favours and blessings to be gifts of God. They regard themselves to be entitled to them or think that they are the consequence of their own competence. For this reason, they arrogantly think that they are entitled by birth to leadership and affluence and who can deprive them of these; if ever there the Hereafter comes, they will live luxuriously there as well.

Since this claim is totally foolish and childish too, it is answered in a sarcastic and disparaging way.

كَلَّا ؕ سَنَكْتُبُ مَا يَقُوْلُ وَنَمُدُّ لَهٗ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ مَدًّا ﴿۷۹﴾ وَّنَرِثُهٗ مَا يَقُوْلُ وَيَاْتِيْنَا فَرْدًا ﴿۸۰﴾[70]

This verse rejects their baseless claim in a furious way. In other words, the punishment ordained for disbelief shall visit them; moreover, because of their arrogance this punishment will continue to increase from God.

On the Day of Judgement, such a person will have no helpers or their deities or intercessors to save him. He should realize that all that He has been given to him by God will be taken away by Him and he will come to God empty handed the way he entered this world empty handed.

وَاتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اٰلِهَةً لِّيَكُوْنُوْا لَهُمْ عِزًّا ﴿۸۱﴾ كَلَّا ؕ سَيَكْفُرُوْنَ بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ وَيَكُوْنُوْنَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضِدًّا ﴿۸۲﴾[71]

The greatest support of these Idolaters was their unfounded deities. They contended that if ever the time came for them to be held accountable before God, these deities will save them because of their influence. In particular, they greatly trusted the intercession of the angels for they regarded them to be favoured daughters of God. They worshipped these angels because they thought that God would never disregard their intercession. In this world also, they were responsible for granting sustenance and children to them from God and after death too if they needed any help, these angels would be there to help them. It is this support and backing that is called عِزٌّ here. Its actual meaning is "power and strength."

The second of the above verses refutes this baseless claim of theirs. It is specified in

69. See, for example, verse 92 of Sūrah al-Naḥl.

70. Certainly not! Whatever nonsense he utters, We shall write it down and increase His torment and We shall inherit the things he lays claim to and he shall come before Us alone.

71. And they have set up deities besides God so that they may be of support to them. Certainly not! They will deny their worship and become their enemies.

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the Qur'ān that when these Idolaters would seek help from their deities citing their worship in the previous world, they will immediately reply that they had no knowledge that some foolish people used to worship them; they never asked for this worship. If they have been foolish enough to do it, they should face its consequences. All their desires will end up in vain. In fact, these alleged deities would curse them and become their enemies.

اَلَمۡ تَرَ اَنَّاۤ اَرۡسَلۡنَا الشَّيٰطِيۡنَ عَلَى الۡكٰفِرِيۡنَ تَؤُزُّهُمۡ اَزًّا ﴿۸۳﴾ فَلَا تَعۡجَلۡ عَلَيۡهِمۡ ؕ اِنَّمَا نَعُدُّ لَهُمۡ عَدًّا ﴿۸۴﴾[72]

When it is said أرسل الكلب على الصيد it means that some unleashed the dog on the prey. Precisely this style is adopted here. The word اَزًّ means "to incite."

These disbelievers would be dealt in this way in accordance with the established practice of God mentioned thus in verse 36 of Sūrah al-Zukhruf: وَ مَنۡ يَّعۡشُ عَنۡ ذِكۡرِ الرَّحۡمٰنِ نُقَيِّضۡ لَهٗ شَيۡطٰنًا فَهُوَ لَهٗ قَرِيۡنٌ[73]

The verses under discussion actually express God's assurance for the Prophet (sws) that he should not be worried at the animosity shown to him by his opponents and not hastily demand their punishment. The more their enmity is increasing in extent, the closer they are getting to their doom. Because of their enmity for the truth, God has let loose devils on them to incite them as much as they can so that the truth is conclusively communicated to them. Soon their matter shall be decided. Every single moment is being counted by God. Once their time expires, they will not even get a moment's respite.

Readers may remember that this section of verses began with Gabriel's advice to the Prophet (sws) to wait and exercise patience. This same topic is now brought up here in another way – this time directly from God. It harbours a final warning for the Prophet's enemies and also gives glad tidings to him that their matter will soon be decided. It is also evident from the words "they are enticing them a lot" and "do not show haste that their matter be decided" that these verses were revealed at the time when enmity of these people had reached its ultimate extent. So much so, the Prophet (sws) too would wait for God's decision regarding this conflict.

يَوۡمَ نَحۡشُرُ الۡمُتَّقِيۡنَ اِلَى الرَّحۡمٰنِ وَفۡدًا ﴿۸۵﴾ وَّنَسُوۡقُ الۡمُجۡرِمِيۡنَ اِلٰى جَهَنَّمَ وِرۡدًا ﴿۸۶﴾ لَا يَمۡلِكُوۡنَ الشَّفَاعَةَ اِلَّا مَنِ اتَّخَذَ عِنۡدَ الرَّحۡمٰنِ عَهۡدًا ﴿۸۷﴾[74]

The word وفد means to go somewhere with honour and respect just as emisaries and

72. Have you not seen that We have let loose devils on the disbelievers. They are enticing them a lot. So, do not show haste that their matter be decided. We are fully counting for them.

73. And he who becomes indifferent to the remembrance of God, We depute a devil on him who becomes his companion.

74. Remember the day when We shall bring the God-fearing towards the Most Merciful God in groups and drive the wrongdoers towards Hell thirsty. On that day, no one will have authority to intercession except he who has taken a promise from the Most Merciful.

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messengers go to a leader or to the court of a king.

The word وِرد is a noun from وردیرد and means to come to a spring of water just as thirsty camels do so.

The exception in اِلَّا مَنِ اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمٰنِ عَهْدًا is severed in my opinion. They negate the intercession of these alleged deities.

Who will have the right to intercede? I have been discussing this issue at appropriate instances in this exegesis. Some principles in this regard are reminded below:

Only the prophets and witnesses to the truth will have the prerogative to intercede. It is a position of honour given to them and will be bestowed by God only on those who are worthy of it.

These people too would only be allowed to intercede with God's permission and will do for only those for whom they are granted this permission. They will not be authorized to take the initiative to intercede for someone they do not have permission.

Their intercession will entirely be based on the truth. It does not behove them to convert falsehood into the truth and vice verse and neither can anyone dare do this before the God Who has knowledge of the unseen.

There will be no intercession for those who spent their lives in polytheism and disbelief or for those who laid claim to faith but spent all their lives doing bad deeds and in disobedience to God and His messenger.

All these principles are verified from the verses of the Qur'ān. I have discussed them at various instances in this exegesis and will also do so in detail ahead. Obviously, when these conditions are imposed on intercession and cannot be denied, there is no possibility of a license be given or obtained for sins on its basis. In this case, only they can hope for intercession who spent their lives on faith, did righteous deeds and sought repentance but because of negligence or emotional frenzy committed sins besides doing pious deeds. Such people it is hoped will be worthy of God's mercy and will be forgiven because of the Prophet's intercession. As for those who while banking on intercession are spending their lives in sin and like the Jews hope to be forgiven because they think that they are a people enveloped by God's mercy, this wishful thinking has no basis in the light of the Qur'ān.

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمٰنُ وَلَدًا ﴿٨٨﴾[75]

The word وَلَدٌ means "children." It is used for both singular and plural entities as well as masculine and feminine genders. The Jews and the Christians and the Idolaters of Arabia all were guilty of ascribing children to God. The Idolaters of Arabia regarded the angels to be daughters of God. The Jews regarded Ezra to be God's son and the status given to Jesus (sws) by the Christians has already been referred to in

75. And they say: "The Most Merciful God has children."

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detail earlier in this *sūrah*.

The previous verse refuted the wrong concept of intercession. Now in the succeeding verses, this heinous form of polytheism is refuted. This form actually originated from the wrong concept of intercession. Obviously, if a free license for sins is to be obtained from God, then this is not possible without ascribing sons and daughters to him and hopes pinned on them that these favoured ones of God will save people from His grasp even if they indulge in all kinds of sins. It is because of this desire that the Arabs regarded the angels to be God's daughters and the Christians fashioned the belief that God has atoned for the sins of mankind by having his son sacrificed.

لَقَدْ جِئْتُمْ شَيْئًا اِدًّا ﴿٨٩﴾[76]

The word اِدٌّ refers to something very grave and ominous.

The style adopted here may be noted. Indirect narration has changed into a direct address. This shift in address from indirect to direct is done to express severity of anger, as can be seen earlier in verse 71.

The fact that what the idolaters say is regarded as something very grave is because they associate partners in God's divinity: God has a great sense of honour for His peerlessness and will never tolerate anything like this. When human beings in their capacity do not tolerate anything that is against their sense of honour, how can the sole owner of the heavens and the earth put up with His servants who worship someone else. This sense of honour of God has been mentioned in all ancient scriptures in the form of a similitude: when you cannot bear your wife sleeping with anyone else, how can the honourable God bear His servant prostrating before someone else.

تَكَادُ السَّمٰوٰتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْهُ وَتَنْشَقُّ الْاَرْضُ وَتَخِرُّ الْجِبَالُ هَدًّا ﴿٩٠﴾[77]

The word هَدٌّ means a wall or a structure falling down with a loud thud.

It is evident from this verse that even the heavens and the earth feel this sense of honour and are not willing to tolerate people who associate partners with God. However, they are obedient to God and as long as He gives respite to a group of people, they too control their anger.

It should be kept in mind that what this verse states is not an exaggeration. What it states is a fact. When a son having a sense of honour would never tolerate being ascribed to some other father than his own or besides his own father others are also regarded as his father, how can the heavens and the earth and the oceans and the mountains put up with such disrespect and dishonour that they be ascribed to someone

76. Very grave is this statement you have given.

77. It may well be that the heavens tear apart, the earth is rent asunder and the mountains collapse to the ground with an explosion ...

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other than the one and only God or that other gods be regarded to have a share with God in their creation. It has been explained at another instance that the heavens and the earth and the sun and the moon have an Abrahamic nature. They express this nature through their manifestation in this universe. This nature of theirs abhors accepting people who ascribe children to God. However, the reins of these elements of nature are in the hands of God. For this reason, they cannot take any independent step.

اَنۡ دَعَوۡا لِلرَّحۡمٰنِ وَلَدًا ﴿۹۱﴾[78]

Stated in this verse is the reason for the fury and anger of the heavens and the earth.

وَمَا يَنۡۢبَغِىۡ لِلرَّحۡمٰنِ اَنۡ يَّتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا ﴿۹۲﴾[79]

The deviant belief of those who ascribe children to God is negated here on the basis of it being against God's attributes: What is the need for him to have children? He neither needs any helper to accomplish His tasks nor any heir to His possessions and assets. He neither needs anyone to keep alive His work nor any support in old age. He is self sufficient. So why should He have children?

اِنۡ كُلُّ مَنۡ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالۡاَرۡضِ اِلَّاۤ اٰتِى الرَّحۡمٰنِ عَبۡدًا ﴿۹۳﴾[80]

This verse refers to the status and position of God's creatures. Each and every one is His servant equal in status. None shall be His son or daughter there.

لَقَدۡ اَحۡصٰىهُمۡ وَعَدَّهُمۡ عَدًّا ﴿۹۴﴾ وَكُلُّهُمۡ اٰتِيۡهِ يَوۡمَ الۡقِيٰمَةِ فَرۡدًا ﴿۹۵﴾[81]

The word إحصاء means to keep something in control.

Everyone will be in complete control of God on the Day of Judgement. He would have counted everything and there is not the slightest chance that anything would be beyond His control or left out of His counting or there be any mistake in counting. Everyone will come before him alone. Neither will he have his children or grandchildren with him nor any helper or intercessor. Each person will be involved so much with his own self that he will forget about others. Every individual will be solely accountable for his deeds before God.

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78. ... that they have ascribed children to the Most Merciful God.

79. And it is not befitting for the Most Merciful to make anyone His children.

80. And whoever are in the heavens and the earth, all will be brought forth in the presence of the Most Merciful as none but His servants.

81. He has surrounded them all and He has fully counted them. And each of them shall come forth before Him alone.

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إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمَٰنُ وُدًّا ﴿٩٦﴾[82]

Mentioned now are people who will remain secure from being helpless and selfish. At other instances in the Qur'ān, it is specified that on that day the angels too will welcome the believers with peace and blessings and salutations shall be conveyed to them from God as well. The believers too will congratulate one another as a victorious team. In short, praises and greetings will be showered from all over.

Readers may have noticed that in this *sūrah*, among the noble attributes of God, Raḥmān (the Most Merciful) is repeated a lot. In no other *sūrah* is it repeated so much. My mentor Farāhī used to call it the Raḥmānī *sūrah.* Obviously, this plentiful mention cannot be without any wisdom. This wisdom in my opinion is that regarding the attributes of God and His dealing with His servants, most misconceptions that have arisen in nations is because of a wrong conception of this attribute. Besides other topics concepts, this *sūrah* presents the correct concept of this attribute.

Here I would like to allude to some deviations that have resulted because of a wrong understanding of this attribute.

The Christians are mentioned the foremost in the *sūrah*. Let us first see how they were led away from the truth. The reason was that they thought that since human beings were eternal sinners and had remained so ever since their inception, hence there was no possibility of their salvation. It was the merciful God Who sent His son out of His grace who atoned for the sins of all those who would believe in him by sacrificing his own life.

Though the misguided beliefs of the Jews are not directly mentioned in this *sūrah* but it is evident from the Qur'ān that in order to hide their wrongdoings they took the pretext of God's mercy. They thought that they were the progeny of prophets and the righteous and hence could not be cast into Hell and if ever they were, it would be only for a few days. After punishing them for a short time, the merciful God would forgive them.

The Idolaters of Arabia worshipped the angels, regarding them to be the daughters of God. They thought that the Day of Judgement was a mere fantasy but if there was any reality in it, the daughters of the merciful God would earn salvation for them through their intercession.

All these misconceptions and deviations were found in the background. In order to rectify them, God has explained the true concept of this attribute. His mercy does not negate His justice and His justice is a requisite of His mercy. When He gives glad tidings to the believers, this is out of His mercy and when He warns the rebellious, this too is because of His mercy. If He forgives the unjust and the rebellious because they are descendents of prophets and revered personalities or because someone has interceded for them or they are ones who love His alleged son, this would be against His

82. However, those who have accepted faith and done righteous deeds, for them the Most Merciful shall soon create love and affection.

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mercy: it would be clear oppression. Since He is the Most Merciful, it is the requisite of His mercy that He listen to the truthful and reward them for being adherents to the truth and cast the oppressors and the wretched into Hell. Casting them into Hell is not against His mercy. It is in fact an exact manifestation of His mercy. This too should be kept in mind that those who disobey God do not harm Him in any way; they in fact harm themselves and others. The limits and bounds imposed by God are not for His own protection for He does not need it; they are for the protection of His creatures and for their development. For this reason, the matter of criminals is not God's personal one; it is the matter of all His creation. The requisite of His mercy with them is that He does not set them free without punishing them. If the *sūrah* is deliberated upon while keeping in view these requisites of the attribute Raḥmān, it will become evident that the warnings and glad tidings found in it are all based on this attribute.

فَاِنَّمَا يَسَّرْنٰهُ بِلِسَانِكَ لِتُبَشِّرَ بِهِ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ وَ تُنْذِرَ بِهٖ قَوْمًا لُّدًّا ﴿۹۷﴾[83]

The antecedent of the pronoun in يَسَّرْنٰهُ is the Qur'ān. Though it is not mentioned in word, but since from the very beginning of the *sūrah* it is being discussed that all prophets of God had the same message for their followers as what the Qur'ān is presenting, the antecedent can only be the Qur'ān. In this context, bringing a pronoun without a mention of the noun is not only not a flaw, it is a requisite of eloquence. This style signifies the majesty of the noun even though it is not stated. Without its mention a person spontaneously knows what it is. Examples of this style abound in the Qur'ān.

People generally regard the word تیسیر to mean "to make something easy." The verse in their view means that the Qur'ān is very easy. Though this inference in itself is correct that God has made the Qur'ān easy; however, it is absolutely incorrect to infer that the Qur'ān is a plain book that needs no deliberation or deep thinking. Those who have this misunderstanding have not understood the correct meaning of تیسیر. In Arabic, this word does not mean to make something easy. It means making something appropriate and apt by equipping it with all that is needed for its objective. The expression يَسَّرَ الفَرَسَ لِلرُّكُوبِ would mean that after been trained and fed, a horse was fully equipped with a saddle, a bridle and a stirrup and made ready for riding. The verse وَ لَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْاٰنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُّدَّكِرٍ that occurs repetitively in Sūrah al-Qamar means "We have made the Qur'ān very apt for instruction and reminding by equipping it with all its requisites." I have already discussed in detail the various aspects of Qur'ānic *taysīr* in my book *Mabādī Tadabbur-i Qur'ān*.[84] Readers may look it up.

The expression قَوْمًا لُّدًّا refers to the Quraysh. The word لُّدًّا is the plural of أَلَدّ. The latter means someone who is belligerent and stubborn. The Arabs were uncouth

83. Thus We have made this Book easy and apt for you in your language so that through it you may give glad tidings to the God-fearing and warn this belligerent nation.

84. Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī, *Mabādī Tadabbur-i Qur'ān* (Lahore: Faran Foundation, 1988), 73-182

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because of living in tribal societies and were also very rigid and prejudiced because of being unlettered. Thus they used to vehemently oppose the Prophet (sws) at every thing and to harrass him would present new demands every now and then.

At the end of the *sūrah*, the Prophet (sws) is assured and his opponents are warned. It is stated that God has made this Qur'ān very appropriate and pursuasive for the purpose of conclusive communication of the truth; it is in the language of the Prophet (sws) and his nation which he can readily understand and also make his nation understand if they really are up to it. Nothing else is needed in its presence. His responsibility regarding it is not to persuade people in its favour. His only obligation is to give glad tidings of success to those who fear God. As for the belligerent and aggressive among them, he should warn them of punishment in this world and in the hereafter. This subject is discussed thus in Sūrah Ṭāhā:

وَكَذٰلِكَ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ قُرْاٰنًا عَرَبِيًّا وَّصَرَّفْنَا فِيْهِ مِنَ الْوَعِيْدِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُوْنَ اَوْ يُحْدِثُ لَهُمْ ذِكْرًا (۲۰:۱۱۳)

Thus We have revealed it in the form of an Arabic Qur'ān and have mentioned My warning in it in various ways so that they remain secure from God's wrath or it may produce some insight in them. (20:113)

وَكَمْ اَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْنٍ ؕ هَلْ تُحِسُّ مِنْهُمْ مِّنْ اَحَدٍ اَوْ تَسْمَعُ لَهُمْ رِكْزًا ﴿۹۸﴾[85]

The word رِكْزٌ means "the sound of someone approaching."

The implication of the verse is that the Prophet (sws) should discharge his obligation of delivering warnings and glad tidings. Those who do not listen to him will see their fate. There are a lot of lessons they can learn from history. Before them many nations were destroyed by God's punishment. They have been wiped out such that no one hears anything about them. In a similar way, these people too will be wiped out because of their denial of the Prophet (sws).

With these words, the explanation of this *sūrah* comes to its completion.

اللھم ارنا الحق حقا وارزقنا اتباعہ وارنا الباطل باطلا وارزقنا اجتنابہ وصلی اللہ تعالی علی محمد وبارك وسلم

(God show us the truth the way it is and give us the urge to adopt it and show us the evil the way it is and give us the urge to stay away from it and blessings of God the exalted be on Muḥammd and peace and salutations).

Lahore
27th Nov 1972

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85. And how many a nation have We destroyed before them. Do you feel any of them or hear their slight mention?

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